

THE GATEWAY

volume XCVI number 26 • the official student newspaper at the university of alberta • www.gateway.ualberta.ca • thursday, 12 january, 2006

LRT line takes its first step south

JAKE TROUGHTON
Senior News Editor

The LRT took a major step last week as the new Health Sciences Station opened across from the University Hospital, but the latest trip is far from finished.

The new station, which was officially opened last week when a train full of dignitaries burst through a banner and the ETS Pipe and Drum Band led a procession through the station, is only 600m from the existing University Station, but its significance goes far beyond the short distance travelled. The station brings the LRT line above ground, allowing the line to be extended south in the future much more affordably.

"This station represents a benchmark step in our plans to fast-track the south leg of the system, which will make the LRT an attractive travel option to tens of thousands more Edmontonians."

MAYOR STEPHEN MANDEL

The \$108 million dollar project took nearly a year and a half to complete, and the City of Edmonton had to upgrade the brakes on the LRT trains to accommodate the six per cent grade of the track between the two stations.

"This station represents a benchmark step in our plans to fast-track the south leg of the system, which will make the LRT an attractive travel option to tens of thousands more Edmontonians," said Mayor Stephen Mandel.

Work has already begun on the next stage of LRT expansion, which will bring the line to Foote Field and the U of A's south campus by 2008. It will then extend to Southgate and Century Park (the former site of Heritage Mall) by 2009. According to Mandel, while that's the end of specific plans for LRT expansion at this point, there will likely be further expansion at a later date.

PLEASE SEE LRT+ PAGE 3



KATIE TWIDDE

FIGHT, FOR THE RIGHT, TO REPRESENT CONSTITUENTS The candidates to be Edmonton-Strathcona's MP took to the Myer Horowitz stage last night for a debate. The Gateway will be conducting interviews with each of the candidates over the next three issues; the first two run today on pages 5 and 6.

Travel Cuts suit set for trial—finally

COSSANNA PRESTON
News Staff

After ten years of legal negotiations, two trial postponements and ongoing attempts to settle out of court, the U of A Students' Union and Canadian Federation of Students-Services will finally face a judge this winter to settle the ownership of Travel Cuts.

The trial, set to begin 8 February 2006, will be the beginning of the end for the ongoing lawsuit. Ten years ago, the SU joined a lawsuit against Canadian Federation of Students-Services (CFS-S), the programs division of the Canadian Federation of Students, a national representation organization. The lawsuit, originally filed by the University of Western Ontario's Students' Council (USC) in 1996, accused CFS-S of illegally transferring assets from the now dormant Association of Student Councils-Canada (AOSC), which the plaintiffs were members of, to CFS-S during its 1987 succession process. Travel Cuts, the student travel company, was one of those assets, and the plaintiffs want to see the full benefits of the company, including free International Student Identity Cards (ISIC), given to all undergraduate student associations across Canada, whether they are part of CFS-S or not.

"I'm cautiously optimistic ... that the case will go in our favour and our students will finally see some justice," said Ryan Dunn, president of the USC.

CFS-S is equally restless for a resolution, and like Dunn, Philip Link, the director of services with CFS-S, felt confident in the case.

"People are anxious to see this finally resolved," said Link. The trial was initially set for September 2003, but was postponed twice due to a conflicting engagement with the plaintiff's lawyer, John McNair. He was appointed to the Anti-Crime and Corruption Unit in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the extension of his appointment abroad triggered the second postponement. But with senior lawyer Mavis Burkiss working on the case in his absence, the students' unions haven't lost step. According to U of A Students' Union Business Manager Bill Smith, Burkiss has made them more prepared than ever.

"She is a very dynamic woman, and has advanced the case quite considerably, so it's heading close to being ready for trial," said Smith. But Link wasn't convinced by the SU's confidence, and maintained that the transfer was a decision by the majority of the AOSC members during the transition process.

PLEASE SEE TRAVEL CUTS+ PAGE 3

New site makes selling used textbooks easier

CHLOÉ FIEDO
Deputy News Editor

The beginning of the semester is usually accompanied by groans from students waiting in line at the bookstore, but a new Students' Union service is making buying and selling textbooks easier with just the click of a mouse.

Xbook, a new online source for textbooks, is a campus-based host at a price they set themselves and buy used ones from other students who have posted them on the site.

SU Science Councilor Steve Kirkham created the service as a project for Computer Science 410 last semester.

"I look at it as a solution for students that are basically too lazy to go to the bookstore and get cash back, or go to SUBtitles and have their books tied up for a year. It's kind of an end-all choice for those students that have piles and piles of books just sitting there in their closets and have not sold them," Kirkham said.

SUBtitles buys back particular textbooks for up to 50 per cent of their original price or puts books on consignment for a minimum of one calendar year, taking 25 per cent of the commission if the book is sold. Alternatively, Xbook recommends a competitive price for each textbook and the profits go entirely to the

students.

The site is specifically designed for U of A students, but if the project goes well, Kirkham hopes to expand its use to other postsecondary institution across Canada. He explained that the idea sprung from the variety of posters students tack around campus in an effort to sell their books.

"I look at it as a solution for students that are basically too lazy to go to the bookstore and get cash back, or go to SUBtitles and have their books tied up for a year."

STEVE KIRKHAM

"It provides an easier alternative for students that go around and put up posters around classrooms. ... It's an electronic, high-tech version of that," Kirkham said.

Xbook provides new and used prices from Amazon, Chapters, the Bookstore, and SUBtitles, allowing busy students to compare prices online.

PLEASE SEE XBOOK+ PAGE 3

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Kills aplenty

Both the Bears and Pandas volleyball teams are at home this weekend, looking to win the Battle of Alberta.

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Mercury Rising

Edmonton punkers Our Mercury have been at it since they were mere babes. Read all about it in A&E.

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THE GATEWAY

thursday, 12 january, 2006
volume XXVI number 200Published since 21 november, 1910
Circulation 11 400
ISSN 0845-356XSuite 2-14
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THE GATEWAY is published by the Gateway Student Journalism Society (GSJS), a student-run, autonomous, apolitical not-for-profit organization, operated in accordance with the Societies Act of Alberta.

THE GATEWAY is proud to be a founding member of the Canadian University Press.

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colophon

The Gateway is created using Macintosh computers, Unisys Powerlink 1000 flatbed scanner, and a Nikon Super CoolScan 5000 flatbed scanner. Adobe InDesign is used for layout. Adobe Photoshop is used for vector images, while Adobe Illustrator is used for printer images. Adobe Acrobat is used to create PDF files which are burned directly to plates to be mounted on the printing press. Text is set in a variety of sizes, styles, and weights of Helvetica, Garamond, and Arima. The Macintosh is the Gateway's sister paper. The Gateway's games of choice are Runes of Magic and World of Warcraft.

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COUNCIL FORUM

Compiled by Ross Pruszkowski

Students' Council meets every second Tuesday in the Council Chambers in University Hall at 6pm. Council meetings are open to all students. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 24 January.

With students filling back from their winter break to a fresh semester of classes, Students' Council returned to nearly the same agenda it was left with before Christmas. If nothing else, the order paper was an effective illustration of the legislative backlog that was caused by the torrent of petition questions during the fall semester. However, with the window to get a question placed on the ballot in time for the March general election closing, Council entered the meeting with high hopes that it would finally be able to turn its attention to previously deferred bills and finally get something done.

WHERE'S THE WEB BOARD AT?

First thought, Council made question period a special order to ensure that it would be reached for the first time since November. While this allowed councilors

to get an update on various initiatives, there were a few pointed questions directed at the members of the executive committee. First, Science Councilor Stephen Kirihani demanded to know why a new version of the SU webboard still hadn't been brought online even though it was supposed to have been up more than eight months ago. This question was answered by Vice-President (Operations and Finance) Jason Tobias, who noted that the delay was due to the executive waiting for a legal opinion on the concept of the web board before proceeding. Tobias explained that the opinion arrived in the last week and that the SU was going to examine it before undertaking any further actions to initiate a new web board.

WHERE'S THE PRESIDENT AT?

The other pointed question came from Arts Councilor Michelle Kelly who, after noting that President Graham Lettner has missed a substantial number of Council meetings—including one where he allegedly went to an intramural basketball game instead—asked for an explanation. Lettner responded by saying that he believed he missed most of the meetings as a result of official SU business. He continued that he went to the basketball game instead of Council because he made a personal choice and had confidence in the executive committee to answer questions on his

behalf.

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

Hopes of getting through the legislation on the agenda were almost dashed when Council got bogged down on the question of wording on a bill that would clearly define the responsibilities of Students' Council. The half-hour discussion on the meaning of words like "governance" led Tobias to grow frustrated with opposition to the bill based on this issue. It seems he struck a chord, as Council voted by a fair margin to codify its responsibilities and subservience to federal and provincial law, ending the heated debate.

UN-DEDICATE THAT!

Council kept its legislative train rolling by approving a bill that ended the collection of the \$0.68 per term dedicated fee for the Student Involvement Endowment Fund. It reached this decision after learning from Tobias that the Fund's endowment had become large enough for it to become self-sustaining. However, councilors did strike a proposal to cease the collection of the Eugene L. Brody fund from the same piece of legislation because of the small size of the fee (\$0.50 per term) and its goal (donations to charitable organizations). In the spirit of giving, Council also gave first reading to a bill that would increase the election funding for candidates running

for Students' Council.

After that, Council examined three bills on second reading and passed two of them, while referring one, on the legitimacy of Council members to hold their office, back to the bylaw committee. This was because Council felt the bill didn't reflect the principles they had passed at first reading and it needed to be clarified.

BACK TO THE BEER

That left just yet another consideration of a petition question regarding beer sales on the agenda—for the fourth time. The reconsideration was the result of a DIE Board appeal of Council's previous decision to reject the petition question that called for the sale of all pints for \$2 on the grounds that it violated common law principles. DIE Board found that these grounds weren't reasons to reject the petition and ordered that it be reconsidered. However, since that decision, Council had changed the bylaws to include these principles—a remedy suggested in DIE Board's report—and the petition was ruled out of order once again.

COUNCIL NOTES

• For the third meeting in a row, a presentation from SU GM Bill Smith on the Travel Cuts law suit (see story on page 1) was deferred because he was out of town on business.

STREETERS

With election day around the corner on 23 January, voters will go to the polls and pick a leader to represent Canada, here at home and on the international stage.

But on a lighter note, which federal leader would you rather date?

Rachel Young
Phys Ed IIAmanda Langhorn
Arts IIStacey Martin
Arts IIIJulie Beck
Education III

Who's the person for Conservatives, Stephen Harper? I'd date him, because I'm totally religious, so I'm completely up for not approving of guys getting married in Church. We would go have dinner at Fire's, then we would go skating at Hawrelak Park.

I pick Jack Layton because of his sexy stance. We would go see March of the Penguins, then go out for dinner and if things went well he could whisk me away on his private jet.

I would go on a date with Stephen Harper and we would go to a French restaurant. I'd try to get him to order in French. I would ask him what he would do for postsecondary education.

I would go on a date with Paul Martin. He would pay for the date with all the money he's stolen from the taxpayers. We would go to Europe on a cruise ship. We would take this cruise ship of all the taxpayers' money, and I'd drink for all of you.

Compiled and photographed by Robin Collum and Weiyang Liu

8101 - 103 St.
Whyte Ave.

Mayor urges increased transit use

LIST • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"We'll be having this complete by 2009, on time and on budget," said Mandel. "From there, we'll continue moving the LRT as new studies and recent information tell us where it needs to go."

"This new station brings great benefits to the University of Alberta students and staff, and I am delighted that the expansion of service occurs here and helps bring the community to our campus," added U of A President Indra Samarasekera.

Edmonton Castle Downs MLA Thomas Lukaszk, on hand representing the provincial government, which contributed the bulk of the station's funding, referenced Mandel's search for a new slogan for Edmonton, and said the opening of the station fits in with a theme of development in the city.

"When I look around at the skyline, and the cranes over there, the new station here, the art galleries, I think it would be fair to call Edmonton the 'Renaissance City,' because it really is going through a renaissance," Lukaszk said.

In response, Mandel joked that, "I



BIRTH OF A STATION The new Health Sciences Station opened last week.

can't sell renaissance, so it could be a problem."

On a more serious note, he said the new station is a step toward making public transit more attractive to commuters, and he hopes more people will take advantage of it, though he admitted he drives to work himself, adding that he'd use the LRT more if he lived near the line.

"Transit is only as good as those who finally get on the bloody thing, so I encourage Edmontonians to get on the transit; use buses, use the LRT, so we get ridership up so we can spend more and more," he said. "If we don't use it, it makes it difficult to fund. So remember how important it is to the environment and our city, and get out of your cars and onto our buses."

Travel Cuts settlement offers rejected

AUCTION • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"We still feel strongly, and are confident that what happened with respect to the transfer was what was supposed to happen, that this is what the vast majority of members of the [AGSC] wanted," said Link, suggesting the associations that disagreed with the transfer were a very small portion.

"That small minority shouldn't have the right to overturn what was a democratic decision."

The plaintiffs contest this claim and have suggested that proper procedure was not followed with regards to voting and meeting notification. While Link has attributed many of

these contests to lapses in institutional memory at the universities, Smith remains ardent that the students' unions are simply looking out for the best interests of their constituents.

"It has always been the feeling that this needs to be resolved not for political reasons, but because the schools felt they'd been wronged by the process," said Smith, emphasizing that no one was eager to go to trial but that alternatives hadn't been successful.

"[The students' unions' presidents] have floated options of settling out of court which appeared to have fallen on deaf ears, so court is going to resolve it."

Link argued that the settlement offers were so unreasonable that they did not warrant a response. Unfortunately, he was unable to go into detail due to legal restrictions.

Still, both sides could agree on one point, the court date. The trial could spill over into April and possibly even the summer depending on schedules and number of witnesses, and both Link and Dunn suggested the process is likely to continue well beyond this year.

"The reality is, either way it goes, this thing's going to be tied up in the court of appeals for quite some time," said Dunn.



BUY THE BOOK Bookstore lineups could get shorter if Steve Kirkham's new Xbook website is successful.

Kirkham based Xbook design on BearScat

XBOOK • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The site is accessible through Bear Scat, a site that Kirkham developed in March 2003 as an alternative to Bear Tracks, and can access the schedule of any U of A student with a campus computing ID. The site offers a list of books relating to each class, but students are encouraged to check their syllabus because texts may vary depending on the professor.

Dr. Elieni Stroulia, associate professor in the Department of Computing

Science, explained that the assigned project was to develop a practical database-driven application that would sell something.

Students were to provide an online catalogue of items and along a description, a shopping cart for buying and to offer administrative support for the service. She explained that Kirkham's project was a little different because he was not creating a site from scratch, but altering one that was already existing. "[Kirkham's] products catalogue is

extracted from Bear Scat and his users do not buy whatever they want, they essentially come up with an agenda defined by their term courses," Stroulia explained.

"So he had both functionalities, but had extra constraints that come from the logic of the application he chose."

There are currently 98 students selling 350 textbooks on Xbook, which has been in operation for about two weeks.

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- Thursday**
Well Highballs \$3.00
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- Friday**
Well Highballs \$3.00 | Big Rock Pints \$3.75

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BRAIN FREEZE
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THE AFTER PARTY & AWARDS NIGHT
POWERPLANT 10:00 PM

FRIDAY
CHILL OUT
QUAD 12:00 PM
MIKOLOGY 107
POWERPLANT 8:00 PM

SATURDAY
ANTIFREEZE AFTER PARTY:
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POWERPLANT 8:00PM



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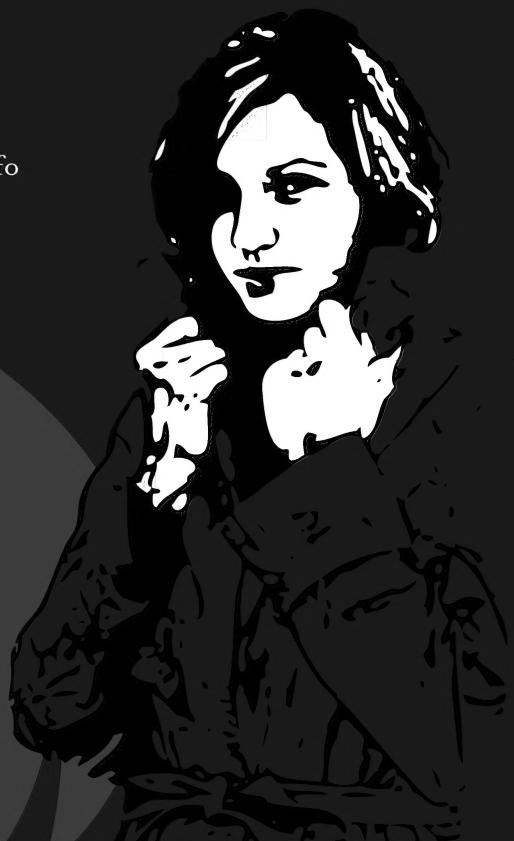
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Liberal Andy Hladyshevsky stresses life-long learning

Part of a series of Q&As with the candidates for Member of Parliament in Edmonton-Strathcona in the upcoming election

JAKE TROUGHTON
Senior News Editor

Andy Hladyshevsky, a lawyer who received a BSc, LLB and MBA from the University of Alberta, is running as the Liberal Party candidate in Edmonton Strathcona.

Editor's note: Hladyshevsky's responses have been edited to fit the available space. A full transcript is available at <http://www.gateway.ualberta.ca/view.php?id=5398>

What do you consider the three most important issues in this campaign?

The most important one is potentiating human beings so they can be the best they can be. What does that mean? It means allowing people to have access to higher education, and allowing them to become the kind of human beings that can maximize their own potential. That sounds very high and noble, but from an educational point of view, it means affordable education—for the entire constituency, not just university students. What it means for me is that those 0-6 [year-old] kids who live in low-income families get early learning and child care so they can come into an education system that's publicly funded, that they get the proper nutrition and developmental attention that they need. ... The second thing is ensuring that people who can't vote for me are totally represented by me—the 0-6, the homeless, the people who are unemployed, the people who are mentally ill, seniors who have difficulty making ends meet—and making sure the federal government does whatever it can to make sure those folks get through their daily lives to become whatever they're going to become. The third plank is creating the circumstances within what I call the business and human environment for that to happen.

While postsecondary education is

primarily a provincial responsibility, the federal government has long had a role as well. What do you think Ottawa's role should be in this area?

This is actually quite a personal question to me. I'm from the Law class of 1979, and [Alberta Advanced Education Minister] Dave Hancock was a classmate of mine. I've had discussions with him, and I've said, "Dave, you and I didn't face the tuitions these kids are facing now. What are we going to do about it?" All kinds of responses: "We're working on it." "We're freezing things." "We're trying to assist the universities so maybe their tuitions don't go up." From my perspective as a federal person, the MP is in his face saying, "Dave, you have to do something about this, and the residents of Edmonton-Strathcona want you to do something about it, and if you won't, then I'll take action and I'll ask my government to take action to assist those people in postsecondary education. ... If we get into the area of what the Liberal government's trying to do to advance scientific research, and the number of research chairs being given out across the country, so that at the advanced learning stages you're also creating centres of excellence. ... I remember at universities in the 1970s and 1980s, there were places where federal funding went into research on something really stupid; how to deal with properly deconstructing tar sands to make it economically viable. Where did that go? I know that half the things I'm involved in now didn't even exist when I was in university, and I know half the things the university students are going to be working on don't even exist. So our role is to make sure that happens.

Are there any aspects of your party's platform that you disagree with or are unsure of?

I don't think disagreement; but ... I

think the party should understand the kind of role Alberta should play, and I think it's difficult when there aren't enough elected representatives from the party in Alberta. I think the party needs to do a better job of, if you will, working with the west and Alberta. Alberta is unfairly seen—not just by the party, but by others in central Canada—as sort of a stereotypical area; the area's diversity is something that people should come to understand, but it's difficult for that image to be played having [Conservative MP] Myron Thompson and other luminaries like that who represent Alberta on the national stage. ... I think the second area the party has to do better in is electoral reform, but that's a grassroots thing that I think the party will listen to.

What, if any, reforms need to be made to Canada's government structure (such as electoral or senate reform)?

I have real big issues with first-past-the-post; at the end of the day, if number one doesn't get 50 per cent plus one, number one should go against number two, and a week after the election we do the whole thing again, and we elect somebody with at least 50 per cent of the vote. That also gets away from the vote-splitting issue that makes things a little more difficult for some of the people. ... I think Canadians are so frustrated that there needs to be that sort of watershed change in the system. In terms of senate reform, I think Canadians want to see federal-provincial discussions to move it to a different level. And I haven't seen a proportional representation proposal that works on a federal level yet, but I'd be willing to see some put forward so we can at least have some logical discussion.

Government ethics have been a major issue in this campaign. What do you think needs to be



POINTED DEBATE Liberal candidate Andy Hladyshevsky at yesterday's forum.

done to reassure voters of their government's integrity?

One, people who've stolen from the federal government should be prosecuted, and those files have been turned over to the RCMP. ... Those who haven't stolen from the government but have engaged in phony contracts should be sued; take away their houses, take away their furs, do whatever it takes. But at the same time, understand that some of the Liberal initiatives, like strengthening the position of the auditor general, are working. ... With the current structure of the auditor general's office, no one will get away with it ever again. ... I also think we need to elect ethical people. We have a three-time incumbent [in Edmonton-Strathcona] who's stood up in Parliament and said he lied; that's not the person you want representing you as having the highest ethics in government. He has a party that's extremely vocal about this; he's rather timid about this, for good reason. Ethics start with the people you elect.

The national campaign has taken a decidedly negative turn in recent days. How do you feel about that,

and how do you think the local campaign has compared?

At the doors locally, people have been upset about the way the national campaign is happening. The voters at the door are saying, "All they're doing is yelling at each other, we didn't want this election." To some extent, you're getting a very negative reaction to having to go back to the polls twice in two years, and knowing it's unlikely to be a majority government, and knowing that if there's another minority, we may be doing this again. They're not pleased about that. ... On the local level, a three-time incumbent should be able to show some progress as a national leader. I have nothing negative to say about him, but he should be able to put his eight years of public service up against my 25, and you should be able to judge who would make the best representative. What's happening in the national campaign, for the party strategists, I'm sure is the nightmare scenario. But as a local candidate, I have to go door-to-door. The people are watching me, and they're watching Jaffer, and they're asking who's going to be the better representative.

Experience

SPANISH

Edmonton Hispanic Bilingual Association
Asociación Bilingüe Hispánica de Edmonton

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WINTER TERM 2006

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Progressive Canadian candidate strikes moderate tone

Part of a series of Q&As with the candidates for Member of Parliament in Edmonton Strathcona in the upcoming election

JAKE TROUGHTON
Senior News Editor

Michael Fedeyko, who works in scientific sales in Edmonton, is running as a candidate with the Progressive Canadian Party, which was formed by former Progressive Conservatives who didn't support that party's merger with the Canadian Alliance.

What do you consider the three most important issues in this campaign?

The most important issues I've heard people talking about are health care, and the environment's really been coming out in this election as well. For the third one, I'm sort of up in the air: a lot of people are talking about electoral reform; alienation is a big one in Alberta, as well. Those would be two of the third-tier issues I've been hearing about.

While postsecondary education is primarily a provincial responsibility, the federal government has a role as well. What do you think Ottawa's role should be in this area?

Obviously, with the decreasing of funds recently, down 34 per cent since 1992, those levels need to be brought back up to ensure proper funding of tuition. I would look at a number of options; perhaps more accountability for the provinces in how those dollars are spent on universities, or even a direct transfer to universities would be another option. If there's differences across the country in how the money is spent, we also need to ensure that they meet students' needs as best they can.

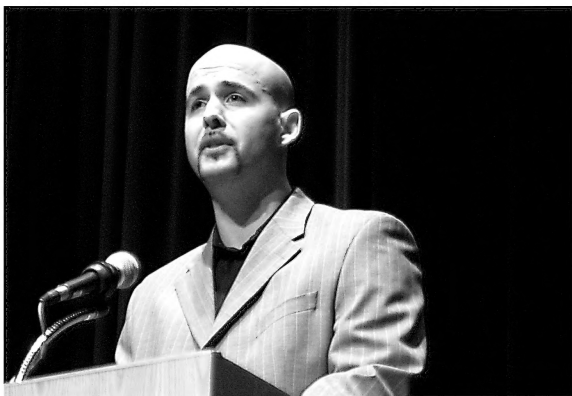
Are there any aspects of your party's platform that you disagree with or are unsure of?

No. That's why I joined this party, essentially. I felt that we had the same views on pretty much every topic. Maybe something will come up in the future, but nothing that would steer me away or lead to real direct conflict. This is a moderate voice; they're looking at taking the best ideas from everywhere, and aren't going to shy away from anything because it comes from a particular party.

What, if any, reforms need to be made to Canada's government structure (such as electoral or senate reform)?

I'm not going to tell you I have an answer to how a country can best be served democratically, but I definitely think we can listen to things like proportional representation or the single transferable vote. I know a lot of Albertans want an elected senate. I'd be happy to table these and debate these as a nation, so we can come up with a system that would serve everybody. I think that would get voters more interested in coming out and being part of the process, and that would be a great benefit for Canada. A lot of people feel they don't have a say in how the senate operates, but it has a lot of power, so we should have some say in it.

Government ethics have been a major issue in this campaign. What do you think needs to be done to reassure voters of their government's integrity?



PROGRESSIVE CANADIAN The PC Party's Michael Fedeyko speaks at yesterday's forum at the Myer Horowitz Theatre.

Accountability is one of the key issues. And transparency, make the system as transparent as possible. In the case of the recent Adscam, the public tender system can be transparent and available to the public. You can even have a body to ensure accountability and transparency, so everybody can see where their tax dollars are spent. I'm a big advocate of that; I want to see where my tax dollars are spent, and I want to see that they're going where they should, and not lining anyone's pocket or being used

frivolously.

The national campaign has taken a decidedly negative turn in recent days. How do you feel about that, and how do you think the local campaign has compared?

It has taken a decidedly negative turn. I don't feel it's constructive, first of all. When I see the ads on TV going negative against someone, it doesn't tell me what that party's platform is or what they're trying to accomplish. It just tries

to play on voters' fears, and I'd rather see some positive campaigning, even just to balance it out. Some of these recent commercials, I think someone should have stopped them. I don't think they should have been let out. But I don't really think it's affected us on a local level. We all live in the same community, so I don't think anybody's looking at bringing down the other candidates. We all have our strong points, and we're all trying to work together in the community, so what's the point in trying to bash each other?

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Campaign encourages student vote

Elections Canada promotes young populations to get out and mark an X on the ballot, even if they're away from home at college on 23 January

MEGHAN SCOTT
MIRANDA MATHEWS
The Aquinian

FREDERICTON, NB (CUP)—With a federal election less than two weeks away, the political parties are stomping harder on the campaign trail, promising tax cuts and gun control in attempts to make sure people vote for them on 23 January.

But not everyone cares where that X is placed, so long as it's placed somewhere. Elections Canada is doing some heavy campaigning of its own, trying to attract the attention of young voters and get them registered.

"In the last couple of elections, students have had particular attention from Elections Canada," said Dana Dorion, Elections Canada media advisor for the Maritime region.

But the attention isn't necessarily flattering; they're getting it because they're not already voting. In the last federal election, in 2004, 60.1 per cent of the general population turned out to the polls. Only 38 per cent of 18-to-30 year olds or first-time voters did. The number was up from 25 per cent in 2000.

There's an added twist for students; many are not in their home constituencies. Students studying away from home are being allowed to vote for candidates in either their home ridings or in their school riding.

Last Thursday and Friday, Elections Canada representatives were on the St Thomas University campus in Fredericton to register voters. Jeremy

Peck and Collin Maicher were stationed in the James Dunn cafeteria, fielding questions and registering voters from morning until night.

"There are more questions than anything," Peck said. "A lot of them are coming up asking to be signed up for this district."

Peck said accessibility is key. "Students don't have to rush to find us," he said. "We're right here."

"In order to get any real credibility from politicians, students have to start voting. Otherwise the issues get swept aside."

MATT GARNER,
ST THOMAS UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' UNION

The St Thomas University Students' Union (STUSU) is working closely with Elections Canada to raise awareness about these kinds of events and to encourage young voters to make their voices heard.

"In order to get any real credibility from politicians, students have to start voting. Otherwise, the issues get swept aside," said Matt Garner, Vice-President (Education) of the STUSU.

In Fredericton alone, there are roughly 12 000 student voters. In the

2004 election the Fredericton district was decided by just over 5 000 votes.

Garrett said he's been getting phone calls and e-mails from students asking for information in the past week. The STUSU is not backing any particular candidate, but Garrett said they will be releasing a report card of party platforms soon. The report will focus on how each party deals with issues related to postsecondary education.

"Our main thing is getting information out there," he said. "We let the candidates do the campaigning."

The STUSU will be working with GoVote on 16 January to organize 16 hours of action. GoVote is a non-partisan youth coalition that aims to help young voters find issues that inspire them to vote and help candidates engage with young voters.

Paul Martin, Stephen Harper, Jack Layton, Gilles Duceppe and Jim Harris have all been invited by GoVote to be interviewed by MuchMusic and MusiquePlus VJs. The interviews will be aired on 16 January.

The Green Party also recently announced a youth voter day to try to encourage young voters to hit the polls. The first day of advance polling, 13 January, is the day Jim Harris' party has designated to try to force federal parties to face young voters' issues.

Garrett said word of mouth is key in getting student out to vote. "Momentum builds interest," he said. "Once you get people involved, others will follow."

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Martin campaign promises Canadian students \$3000 each in tuition relief

With tuition increasing every year, students are struggling to afford the costs of postsecondary education and the Liberals are promising to help them out

ERIKA MEERE
CUP Québec Bureau Chief

MONTREAL (CUP)—At an election campaign stop last week, Liberal leader Paul Martin pledged to provide students with billions of dollars in tuition assistance if re-elected prime minister, but critics say the plan does not address the problem of rapidly rising tuition in Canada.

Speaking at the University of Waterloo, Martin unveiled a new system of grants that would pay for half of student's tuition in their first and last years of university, to a maximum of \$3000 per year.

"Reducing the cost of tuition from Canadian families, and improving Canadians' access to skills training and employment opportunities, is about ensuring that all Canadians—and their families—can prosper in the global economy," Martin said in a press release.

The grants would be administered through the current Canada Student Loan Program, and be available to every student in Canada outside Quebec who begins their first degree program in the 2007/08 school year. The program is expected to cost \$2 billion over five years.

Though Martin said the grants will not be available to Quebec students, as the province has its own system of grants and loans, he said he would

offer "full financial compensation" to the Québec government.

George Soule, the National Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students, said Martin's plan does nothing to address the funding shortfall that has led governments and postsecondary institutions to triple their tuition fees since 1990/91.

"The problem [of high tuition fees] was created when Paul Martin, as finance minister, cut billions of dollars from postsecondary education."

JAMES TURK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

"In the absence of a plan to regulate tuition, this plan is incomplete," said Soule, explaining that, as tuition fees continue to rise, the effectiveness of a \$3000 grant will be diminished.

He added that a \$3000 grant is not sufficient to cover half the tuition of students in provinces such as Nova

Scotia, where the average tuition is \$281 this year.

James Turk, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, said he was pleased the Liberals have made postsecondary education a priority during this campaign, but added that Martin himself is largely responsible for recent tuition fees increases in Canada.

"The problem [of high tuition fees] was created when Paul Martin, as finance minister, cut billions of dollars from postsecondary education," he said.

Martin was finance minister between 1993 and 2001. In 1996, he created the Canadian Health and Social Transfer (CHST), which lumped together money for education, health-care and social assistance into one payment to the provinces. This fund was cut by \$7.4 million between 1995/96 and 1999/00, according to the Canadian Council on Social Development.

Both Soule and Turk called on the Liberals to re-invest \$4 billion into education in the form of a dedicated transfer payment for postsecondary education that could be used both for tuition relief and for funding postsecondary institutions.

Martin pledged this fund during the 2004 election campaign at a televised meeting with students in Newfoundland, but has yet to follow through on the promise.

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THE GATEWAY



OPINION

opinion@gatewayualberta.ca • Thursday, 12 January 2006

Vote: it's your job

TOMORROW I WILL TRUDGE to the advanced poll and cast what will be my seventh election ballot. In this extended election season I'm already starting to ask myself what the point of the exercise is.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not talking about there not being any wholly palatable choices at the ballot box, though that's a problem as well, but the whole process of voting in general. Only once after an election did I feel the rush of enfranchisement, and that was at the municipal level. Usually it leaves me feeling impatient and tired.

Maybe it's where I live. Alberta has never been the heart of democracy. We've only seen four parties rule here, and all have had long reigns, otherwise unbroken until their eventual defeat. In such a situation, where even the possibility of changing the guard is almost unthinkable, it's hard, regardless of your political affiliation, to get excited about democracy. The fact that a similar, if not quite as encompassing, problem happens at the federal level doesn't help things much.

Perhaps it's our system of selecting officials. When politicians winning seats get less than a majority of the vote, it's hard to see democracy being represented. It's also almost impossible to see the problem being fixed in any substantive way by the people who are elected by the flawed system. Who wants to use their power to take power away from themselves?

Conceivably, it could be because I usually vote for someone who loses. However, I've voted for winners too, incumbents even. Their victory rarely excites me much either—only when I didn't expect my guy to win, and he did, was there any excitement. This, however, could be getting to the heart of the problem.

Elections aren't supposed to be exciting, and voting isn't supposed to be fun. They can be these things, but that isn't their primary purpose.

The thing is you have to vote even when you don't like any of the candidates, and even when "your guy" is going to win in a landslide. This isn't a football game, and you shouldn't sell your tickets if you expect a blowout. People tell you that voting is a privilege. That's bullshit. Voting is a job demanded by being a citizen, and like any job, if you're shitty at it, you should be fired.

We've decided that as a society, we don't trust the people in power to make the decisions about who should be in power. That's fine. What most people don't seem to realize is that we essentially put ourselves on an elaborate hiring/job review board and, as anyone who has been on a hiring board before knows, that isn't much fun. It's a lot of work.

"Hey," you say, "maybe I don't want to be part of your citizen's club. Maybe I think the system is so messed up that it doesn't deserve my vote!" Well, in a way, that's voting too. If you don't vote for those reasons, you're voting against the system and society (though I think spilling your ballot may be a more effective means of doing that).

Or maybe you don't want to be part of this whole hiring board we've set up for ourselves. Well, you can vote for that too. Germany did it to great effect in 1932. And to undercut my serious point to humorous effect, so did the Galactic Senate when Chancellor Palpatine moved into his position as Emperor.

So to answer my own question, I guess voting in an election is a job that I have to do, even if I don't enjoy it very much. I can try to make my work environment better, and make the job matter more, but I simply can't abdicate it to someone else. That would just be lazy.

DANIEL KASZOR
Editor-in-Chief

We got Fark'd

AND ANOTHER THING, if any of you went to our website on Tuesday night, or are currently looking for our "Best of Campus Crime Beat 2005" (Tuesday, 10 January) online, you got negative results. That's because the fine folks at Fark.com linked to it with a headline mentioning topless girls and handjobs.

After an hour there were almost 25 000 click throughs. Our web site was down for the count. For the safety of the rest of the site, the story needed to be taken down. So, if you want to see that story, e-mail me at etc@gatewayualberta.ca.

DANIEL KASZOR
Editor-in-Chief



LETTERS

You have to take the good comics with the bad for belly laughs

I feel compelled to respond to the recent criticism of the Gateway comics section (Re: "Gateway comics offensive, not funny," 10 January). Sure, even I find the occasional comic falls on the wrong side of the fine line dividing bad taste and laugh-out-loud humour. I think, though, that the best Gateway comics are always walked this line (think *Space Moose* or *Bob the Angry Flower*).

It's my opinion that the occasional cringe-inducing *Mich Mich* is the price we have to pay for a *Mike Winters* gem—a fantastic bargain if you ask me. Maybe everyone could be happy if we just had more *Mike Winters* comics?

MATT LAROCQUE
Medical Physics Grad Studies III

Klein's government not footing the bill for tuition freeze

I'd like to make a clarification regarding Premier Ralph Klein's promise guaranteeing that tuition will not increase in 2006/07, discussed in Ross Prusakowski's "Top newsmakers on campus deal with new money and growing losses" (11 January, 2006).

In the article, Prusakowski stated that Klein "extended the pledge to cover the increase slated for the next academic year." In fact, all Klein promised was that "tuition would not increase." He made no promise that the provincial government will cover the tab.

This means that the universities

could be forced to cover a tuition increase out of their budgets, negatively impacting the quality of education students receive. Though this is a slight difference in meaning, it holds great potential for harm in students' tuition levels and quality of education. It's important for students to know about the uncertainty surrounding these tuition announcements.

In any case, technically tuition did increase for this academic year—by 5.75 per cent—and will likely be raised for next fall—by 6.4 per cent—at next Friday's Board of Governors meeting. This year's increase was just covered by arrears of the 5.75 per cent increase. How exactly students will "not pay more" this fall remains to be seen, and even if the province does cover the tab we fear any rebates could disappear in 2007/08, whereupon students would face a triple bump (the compounded total of the 5.75 per cent rebated this year, this coming year's 6.4 per cent and any further increase next year all at once). Currently, the Students' Union is working to have the 2006/07 increase funded by the government, and is calling for the province to deliver on the Premier's promise for a new tuition policy for this fall, pre-empting the likelihood of a triple bump in 2007.

SAMANTHA POWER
SUVF External

Turning the 'Plant into a crackhouse the solution to its money woes

I just wanted to say I think that was a great idea on how to save the PowerPlant (Re: "Smokes and VLTs could save the PowerPlant," 10 January). If we were the only indoor smoking establishment in the city, we'd be making mad coin! All the

smokers of the city could come onto campus and cram into the student bar, and the SU would clean up.

But why stop with gambling and smoking? I mean, if we were the only bar in the city that allowed people to pop some pills, smoke crack or even shoot up heroin, we'd have the monopoly on that in the city, too! It would be packed 24/7 and everyone could just watch the cash flow in. I say let's push aside our crack bias for money.

PAUL KNOCHER
Science I

Conservatives have a real solution to handgun violence

In his January 10th article "Handgun rhetoric may decide the election" Mike Larocque states, "...no one [political parties] seems quite sure what to do about it [the rash of gun violence in our cities, particularly Toronto]." Fact is, the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) does know what to do about gun violence. The CPC has laid out a four-part plan to deal with the problem.

First, preventing gun violence in the first place by reinvesting \$50 million (over five years) in crime prevention and community programs that assist at-risk youth. Second, stopping the flow of guns coming from the US by providing our customs agents with the support and equipment they need to stem the flow of these weapons. Third, hiring a minimum of 3500 police and RCMP officers across the country. And finally, if individuals make the choice to exclude themselves from society by carrying a weapon on Canadian streets the CPC will remove them from society by introducing mandatory sentencing for major firearms offences.

This means that if you are caught on Whyte Avenue with a loaded, prohibited weapon, such as a handgun, you will go to prison for a minimum of five years. If you murder someone with that prohibited weapon, the sentence doubles to a minimum of ten years in prison. By contrast the Liberals have proposed a phony ban on handguns by outlawing guns that are already effectively banned. Some handguns used in crimes are stolen from people who do own those handguns legally for the purpose of target shooting or collection. So the rationale for the handgun ban is to confiscate these legally owned firearms so they cannot be stolen. This is akin to holding the owner of a stolen vehicle partially responsible for any crime committed where the vehicle was used.

The ban will cause no weapons shortage in Canada, as the Liberals have refused to crack down on weapons smuggled in from the US. On gun violence Larocque says that neither party is right, nor is it wrong, but while the Liberals prefer a phony handgun ban to solve the problem, the CPC has a concrete plan to deal with urban gun violence.

SCOTT A PENNY
Engineering III

Letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students' Union Building, or e-mailed to opinion@gatewayualberta.ca.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, and to refuse publication of any letter that deems racist, sexist, libelous or otherwise hateful in nature.

Letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words, and should include the name, student identification number, program and year of study of the author, to be considered for publication.

The English language could be a lot better



SCOTT
LILWALL

The English language has had a pretty good run, most would agree. With roots tracing back to the introduction of Germanic peoples into the south-eastern British Isles, the English language is still just a little 'un, linguistically speaking. Even so, it has shown itself as a motivated young go-getter: with around 380 million people already speaking it as a first language, it has achieved *lingua franca* status (basically a bit of fancy Latin that means it is widely spoken by non-native speakers). Which makes the immediate demise of the language all the more devastating.

Where do I get the chutzpah to state that the third-most-widely-spoken language on the planet will soon be relegated to the trash heap? Well, I am somewhat of an expert. Having grown up with the drive for success that falls somewhere between that of an armless turtle and an amputated finger, I have learned one universal truth: anything difficult is not worth it if it's hard, you might as well give it up. And the English language is a damned difficult way to communicate. In fact, some have said that it is the second-hardest language in the world to learn—the first being a dialect spoken by a remote New Guinean tribe, who communicate purely through hand stands and bitchin' guitar riffs. The fact is that English has become bloated and

confusing. We might be better off scrapping the whole damned thing. But English-lovers have nothing to fear, for all is not lost. We can alter the fate of our beloved tongue with a few simple changes, which can ensure that it will not go the way of the other, impotent languages (I'm looking at you, Gaelic).

First off, the English language has far too many words. Conservative estimates put the number at about 480 000 or so. What the hell do we need all those words for? To express our innermost feelings and thoughts? To put in words our burning passions and deepest fears? No. We are building a language here, not a LiveJournal for a fifteen-year old girl. Toss out that fancy poetic language and those pretentious synonyms. We need to streamline. Why waste time with words like "wonderful," "amazing" and "euphoric" when we already have one word that means all those things—"good." Using this same "USA Today approach" to vocabulary, we could replace the word "terrible" with "very bad." Likewise, "catastrophe of biblical proportions" could be replaced with "really, really, really, really bad." Sure, thesaurus sales might go down, but it's for the greater good. The greater really, really good, in fact.

Now that we have made fewer words in the language, we should move on to cutting out some letters we don't need. Like the double letter. Get rid of them. You can increase the efficiency of a word like "batter" by getting rid of that second "t." Some might say that we need some of those double letters in the English language. Well, bud, if you want double letters, speak Welsh. This

is the new, better English. And since we are scrapping rid of letters we don't need, we might as well say goodbye to those bad "silent letters." If the dam thing isn't pronounced, what's the point? Trust me, once we take away all the silent and dumb letters, things will become much easier to understand.

One of the baddest things about English is its sly approach to plurals. While most plurals are a simple matter of adding the letter "s" to the end of the word, some words like "box" and "moss" raise the middle finger to tradition. Next new rule: pluralize by adding an "s." No "glases," no "wolves," and for the love of God, no "cacti" or "octopi." I mean it. The first person who tries to pluralize a word by putting an "i" at the end of it is to be hanged without trial. That's another new rule for Beter English: executions. The only exception to the pluralizing rule comes when adding an "s" would result in double letters, like the word "bos." In that case, replace the letters "s" with an easy, god "x." Example: "I am going to register for my Fal clax." Finally, the last rule for the English of the future involves words like "best" and "anyone." It is hard to tell when to use the word "more." So don't just the "er/-est" rule will work here. It is just a greater way of getting your point across.

It might take a little bit of getting used to in the beginning, but I'm sure that this will prove to be the greatest way to take our complicated language. With a bit of practice and a lot of dedication, we can make sure that the language that we hand down to those that come after us will have rules and ideas that finally make sense.

Everyone cler on al that?



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Democracy's hard—let's explore our options



ADAM
GAUMONT

Boy, all this talk about the election has got me downright exhausted! I mean, didn't we just have one of these things? Apparently the last one was in 2004, but it seems like just yesterday that we had to go down and rate all those candidates on that confusing fill-in-the-blank form. But hey, maybe it's just me—heck, I'm still getting used to the fact that it's 2006!

To make matters more complicated, there are all these confusing scandal allegations this time around. For what seems like an eternity, there's been all this talk in the media about this infamous Kickboxing Scheme. I mean, I'm sure that some bad people did some bad things and whatnot, but that's what that inquiry thing is for, right? I'm sure that the police have arrested all of the bad guys by now, anyway.

But what really drains me is trying to choose from all these different candidates. Case in point: at my riding's "town hall meeting" Tuesday night—which caused me to miss an episode of *Lost*—there were all sorts of crazy candidates in the running, like the Green Party, the Marxist-Leninist Party, even the Marjanianna Party? What their platform, anyway? Get stoned and complain about the government? Sheesh.

And then there are the debates: two whole hours of those stuffy old white guys talking about this, that, and the other thing—and with no commercial breaks! I mean, what if I have to

go to the bathroom or something? And then they did them the next night in French! Just how many languages are they going to be doing this thing in?

Instead, I think we should look for a much simpler democratic process. Take our neighbours to the South, for example: the Americans only have to choose between two candidates, which makes things a whole lot simpler. Kerry, Bush, Kerry, Bush; you just have to pick one, and then it's over for four years—there's none of this "election every 18 months" business like we have here in Canada.

So if you're a real stickler for democracy, we could follow the lead of "elected" dictators...

As ruthlessly efficient as the American electoral system is, however, I still think that it would be much easier just to do away with democracy in Canada altogether. Think about it: why don't we just appoint our prime minister? It would be over and done with in no time. But who will do the appointing, you ask? Well, I don't know. The Governor General maybe? It's like Lisa said in that one Simpsons episode: "Who will police the police?"

Therefore, I propose an alternate solution, namely, a self-appointed dictator. After all, many leaders of the world's most powerful countries have been dictators—and it's usually worked out pretty well! Guys like Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini simultaneously strengthened their countries'

respective economies and rallied their people into unity—something the little 'ol melting pot that is our country could surely use.

Now, don't get me wrong: power obtained by force, such as in a military coup, just isn't cool. So if you're a real stickler for democracy, we could follow the lead of "elected" dictators, such as former Iraqi Saddam Hussein or perennial Cuban favourite Fidel Castro, as well as lesser-known totalitarianists such as Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali or Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser. These guys consistently garner 98 to 100 per cent of the vote when they have elections—now that's what I call voter satisfaction! Sure, they were usually the only candidates in their respective countries, but that's the beauty of it: with the one-party system, it's so easy to choose!

We should also consider the fact that when a lot of countries, especially those in Central and South America, do democratically elect their presidents, these guys usually end up getting killed by the Americans anyway. Or look at Iraq: they used to have a very efficient system of their own—one that saw very little dissent during Hussein's tenure. I might add—but now that these aforementioned Yankees have imposed their own brand of democracy on the Iraqi people, their country is in shambles!

Clearly, then, democracy is both dangerous and inefficient. Furthermore, Canada can ill-afford to upset its American neighbours at this point—after all, who else will protect us when we get invaded? That's much "despotic regime" sounds so much cooler than "democratically elected government of the people." It just rolls off the tongue: despotic regime... despotic regime... despotic regime...



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Whyte plague ravaging Edmonton



CHRIS O'LEARY

There's a reoccurring tragedy that takes place on the streets of Edmonton, and to this day, no one has done anything to stop it.

No, it's got nothing to do with the homeless, and it's not the always-persistent rash of thieves who prey on poorly secured bikes or those who are willing to break a window in your car to get a discman that you got as a birthday present in 1997 either—this problem reaches much further than that, and it can happen to anyone.

The streets of Edmonton, Whyte Avenue in particular, are contaminated with an unholy airborne virus.

The virus seems to take to the air in seven-day cycles and travels best in the dark. It first begins to make its way to civilians on Thursday nights. It spreads explosively on Fridays and by Saturday, it's bordering on pandemic. Miraculously and inexplicably, the virus is all but gone on Sunday morning and is hardly detectable again until the following Thursday, when it gears up to wreak havoc on the city for another three days.

All one has to do to be contaminated by the virus is frequent Edmonton's popular stops on the nightlife scene. This is why Whyte Avenue is such a goldmine for the virus. People breathe in this contaminated air and experience sharp and sudden alterations to their personalities. They become loud, obnoxious and confrontational. They believe that everything they say and do for the remainder of the night will be the stuff of comedic genius. These people also believe that they are suddenly irresistible to the opposite sex. Should a virus-carrying male fail to hook up with a virus-carrying female, his probability of getting in a fight when the bar

closes skyrocket. Worst of all, those exposed to the virus are convinced that all of these positive traits are conveyed in their suddenly phenomenal dance skills, which must be shared with the world.

The severity of the person's reaction can be traced to the amount of exposure that a person has to the contaminated air. Symptoms of exposure to the virus include but are not limited to: excessive use of cologne or perfume; greasy hair for males and slinky hair for females; popped collars; Diesel clothing; and tight pants that are too small, which leads to exposure of either a) ass crack, or b) unsightly excess stomach weight.

Worst of all, those exposed to the virus are convinced that all of these positive traits are conveyed in their suddenly phenomenal dance skills, which must be shared with the world.

Aside from the risk of severe annoyance that those infected with the virus carry to others, they also possess a significant risk to themselves. Infected persons have been known to vomit or even lose consciousness from exposure to the virus. Evidence of this is present all over the walls and toilets of the following establishments: O'Byrne's, Hudson's, Iron Horse, Suite 69 and The Armoury. Evidence can also be found outside of the entrance to these bars, with Stoll's being an example that quickly comes to mind.

This problem needs to be remedied immediately, before the virus spreads further, and people act like this on a daily basis, or someone loses an eye when they pop a collar too quickly for their own good. How many people will have to dance like assholes before the proper authorities step in and get this increasingly horrible situation under control?

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His name's Tim, and he has a drinking problem



DAVID
BERRY

They say that, to get someone to truly reform their ways, you need to publicly humiliate them. Well, I don't know if "they" say that so much as I made that up because I enjoy publicly humiliating people, but regardless, surely we can all agree that being widely ridiculed by, say, the campus community is bound to get someone to reform their ways, right? With that in mind, as much as it pains me to say this, I'm afraid that I have to embarrass a friend for his own good: Tim, you really need to start drinking less.

I mean, we go out almost every night—and lunches on weekends—and of the few times that I can actually remember what happened, I remember you being sloshed out of your ever-loving mind. Why, just last week, when I came out of the bathroom after cleaning the puke off of my shirt, I saw you pouring my beer into your glass. I mean, I had ordered another one on my way to the john anyway,

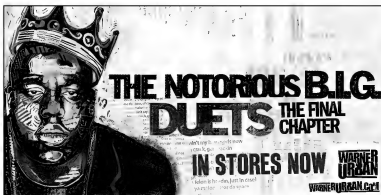
so it wasn't a big deal, but that kind of desperate behaviour is the hallmark of an alcoholic.

And that's hardly the first time you've drank to what we'll call excess, is it, Tim? Need I remind you of midterm week? All I know is, when I passed out at midnight, that bottle of tequila in my hand was at least half full. When I woke up the next morning, not only did I find my pants outside, I found the bottle smashed on the sidewalk beside them. I cut my tongue on the broken glass lapping up the few remaining drops you left, you inconsiderate bastard. (I also noticed that you finished off the rest of my rye, too; and those beers I had in the fridge.)

And really, that's pretty much the problem with your drinking: I'm sorry to say it, but you become a belligerent asshole when you're drunk, pal. I mean, it's bad enough you always heading me back when I decide to finally teach those punk asses down at the end of the bar a lesson, but did you really have to make such a big deal about the time I tried to expose myself to the waitress at the Garneau Pub? I mean, for starters, I probably would have had to put down at least one of my drinks to actually get my pants off; and besides, Larry and Phil know me—it's not like they'd care. But no,

there you were, your breath reeking of vodka and Coke—just because I can't smell any liquor on you doesn't mean I don't know you're drinking, you lush—telling me how "embarrassing" I was, and how "maybe it was time [I] went home." Do you have any idea what it took for me to convince everyone that you were actually a nice guy after that? They all just looked at me like I was crazy when I told them you normally didn't behave like that, and then actually told me that it would be best if I went to another bar from now on.

Look, man, I'm sorry it had to come to this, but I love you, you know, and I just couldn't see you throw your life away into an empty bottle. I mean, life is bullshit, man, and, I know, like, nobody wants the truth—oh, yeah, sorry all say they want the truth, but then you tell them about how sometimes when you're shoving in the morning you just, like, fucking stare at that razor blade, and wonder if the Mach 3 would, like, cut three times deeper than a regular one, and if that would make a difference, and then they all run away, like everyone else that ever loved you. Like, fuck, man, that's total bullshit. Fucking people, man, I'm glad you're here to listen to me. Fuck, man, let's go get a beer.



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His name's Dave, and he has a whistling problem



TIM
PEPPIN

Recently, while in a men's bathroom on campus, I had a rather unsettling experience. An experience that, if only because the rules of conduct inside the men's room are so regimented, and because it was such an egregious and bold-faced—yet frustratingly common—violation of them, merits some discussion. However, before I can explain the specific incident and its discomfiting effects, I must provide some context by describing the general customs and politics of men's public bathrooms. For most guys, the following paragraphs will be familiar, though I hope not boring. It has come to my attention, however, that most girls have no idea what goes on inside a men's bathroom, aside from the obvious. So read on.

The atmosphere inside a men's room is ordinarily tense, created by a combination of tacit homophobia, exposed and handled genitalia, and forced proximity to other males. To diffuse this tension, a set of rigid conventions has been established that serve to minimize unwanted contact and to clarify intent.

The first thing you'll notice upon entering the room is that each male behaves as though he were the only one present. No one speaks. It is absolutely forbidden to talk to anyone who is not a close friend, and even then conversation must be sparing,

as it's disruptive to any others present. This silence, broken only by the rush of running water, the soft buzz of zippers and the sound of shuffling feet, is often in eerie and unnatural contrast to the commotion outside the bathroom. Conversations started outside the room can be heard to end mid-sentence, and to resume without a break upon leaving.

To choose a urinal beside another man in an empty row is an inexcusable breach of etiquette...

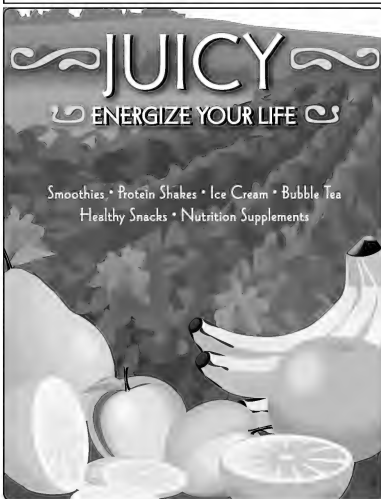
Similarly, eye contact must also be scrupulously avoided as it might be misconstrued as a homosexual advance. You can't be too careful. And yet each male is acutely aware not only of the presence, but of the exact direction and speed of movement of all the others, as physical contact is never, ever made. Were men to take such scrupulous care to avoid one another when driving, the incidence of motor-vehicle accidents would plummet.

These principles result in specific etiquette at urinals, and, to get back to the point at which I started, in stalls. As girls are unfamiliar with urinals, I'll have to elaborate again. Bear with me. A urinal is essentially a ceramic booth inserted into a wall, separated from those beside it by a foot of space, often without even a divider. While more convenient than a booth, it's also far more exposed; there's the ever-present risk that another male may see your junk, thereby causing

the room to implode, collapsing to an infinitely small point and creating an irreparable space-time rift. Men will separate themselves predictably to maximize distance between one another, and to minimize association with another man. To choose a urinal beside another man in an empty row is an inexcusable breach of etiquette, and may be perceived as an act of outright aggression.

Like urinals, there is also a set of polite conventions for the use of stalls—less known, but no less important. To quote Dr. John-Arch MacDougall, professor emeritus at Macray University, "What must be understood is that public defecation, because of the insuppressible and indiscriminate manner in which odour diffuses, is essentially an act of violence against every other person present. The defecator aggresses from within the confines of the stall." Because of this, and because everyone is expected to be discreetly aware of the movements of others, it's customary for someone in a stall, though they might be long since finished, to wait until those present when they began have exited, or, if they must come out, to adhere with absolute severity to the conventions of the bathroom.

So given all this, it was with no small measure of amazement and horror that I witnessed a man huffing and grunting inside a stall who then stood up, flushed, and not only exited the stall while we were still there, but brazenly looked around the room and actually started whistling! It was a shocking dismissal of useful and well-founded social norms. A guy faints. I'm surprised I made it out before the room disintegrated.



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Butterdome for Dummies—the gym guide

AMANDA
TIERMER

We've all looked in the mirror and decided the person looking back at us needs some work. Time to end the self pity and head to the gym. Like any other "scene," a workout facility is filled with unique rules and cliques. To help out those with firm resolutions, but little experience, a guide called *Butterdome for Dummies* has been compiled.

Once you enter the gym, you'll notice a common uniform. To fit in among the experts, a specific dress code must be followed. This includes belly-baring spandex shirts, wife beaters and tiny "ass" shorts to reveal your physical perfection. The gym, similar to a bar or dance club, is an exceptional opportunity to parade in front of the opposite sex, flaunting all of your desirable elements. Welcome to the meat market. If you cannot pull off spandex, or if you have any unappealing bulges, it is recommended that you do not enter the gym until you can meet the dress code.

If you're shelled out for your new clothes, and are still determined to live out your "get buff" or "lose weight" resolution, observe your superiors attentively and mimic them. Most women find role models in what the gym culture calls "cardio sluts", skeletal females who nervously watch

the calorie counter accumulate on the treadmill, elliptical cross trainer, stair master or exercise bike. Men appear to prefer the "steroid junkies"; males who have created biceps larger than their heads with the aid of large quantities of synthetic hormone. The junkies are found in the weight-lifting section of the gym, and rarely leave. While the "cardio sluts" are obsessed with negative calories, the "steroid junkies" praise high-calorie protein shakes, bars, and tuna.

The gym, similar to a bar or dance club, is an exceptional opportunity to parade in front of the opposite sex ...

A strange phenomenon, which is very similar to the mythological story of Narcissus, tends to occur in front of gym mirrors. People, especially men, will watch themselves in a very passionate way while lifting weights in front of a large mirror, never speaking, but emitting occasional grunts of satisfaction or glee. Sometimes their minds will wander towards the social benefits of having such a toned body, others begin to have homoerotic fantasies about themselves; regardless of reason, some men proudly sport erections harder than their abs.

Less gym related to the mirror people, there's also a breed of made-up, hair-

sprayed, immaculate beauties who enjoy spending hours doing little more than prancing around the gym. They rarely touch any equipment, but shake their assets while walking in front of eager weightlifters, only to glare when greeted with a smile. They also spend their time at the gym working on their tongues, as they exhibit exceptional endurance in talking. Although they rarely leave with any sign of sweat or newly forged muscles, the social butterflies sometimes gain a few extra digits from grateful admirers.

Another hidden secret of gym culture is that some stragglers refuse to move on, even when they are well beyond their prime. The "jolly seniors" tend to take old equipment out of the shed while watching youthful beauties on the treadmill. Even as a newbie, it is important to combat this phenomenon by making a personal agreement with yourself to give it up before you are past your prime.

Last, there are the dazed and confused. These creatures flock to the gym in great numbers in January, but soon dwindle to traces. They are newbies who have no idea what they're doing, and spend hours wandering around expanding on their voyeuristic and copycat tendencies. They watch the elites, the cardio whores and steroid junkies with absolute envy. Those who aren't scared away gradually gain knowledge of the gym culture. Welcome to your new life.

Now the fitness junkie buried deep inside your rolls is ready. Memorize *Butterdome for Dummies* to avoid your own humiliation.

Canada is a rich, ugly, oily bastard—he deserves better

ROSS
PRUSAKOWSKI

to 1.64 million barrels from Mexico and 1.56 million barrels from Saudi Arabia, according to Bloomberg), and sending them 99 per cent of our total oil exports. This is a function not only of their close proximity to us, but of the North American Free Trade Agreement that was supposed to benefit all parties involved.

Instead, the agreement hasn't been giving America's oil daddy more of what he wants—actual free trade on softwood lumber and a cut to the heavy subsidies the US farm industry receives that make Canadian farmers uncompetitive—but is bleeding Canada of its resources. Relations between the two nations are hitting an all-time low because of many different reasons, not the least of which is the unwillingness of the energy-addicted bimbo that is the US to put out more for all we're sending her way.

We need to be smarter as a nation and demand more for what we're receiving for our precious oil and natural gas reserves. While it may negatively affect our relationship with the US, Canada must ignore the pleading cries of overly territorial politicians in Alberta and make changes to our energy relationship with America as a response to other trade disputes.

As Hugh Hefner has shown so many times over the years, it's not just the women that can trade up if they're getting bored or short-changed by their partners. The enormous untapped oil sands reserves, and the certainty of its supply that make our energy reserves so attractive to the US also draw the attention of other major economies. The surge in demand for resources from China and India means that there is a strong market for our resources, and one that may even pay a higher price than we're currently receiving. By tapping into these markets, Canada can force the US to put up and deal with its demand for free trade both ways.

Or we can kindly ask the US to shut up, end—or curtail—our energy relationship with them, and enter into a new partnership with China or India, where the expectations of the relationship are clear from the outset. Hopefully the new partner will be someone who has a little more appreciation for our assistance and isn't afraid to put out a little more for their oil daddy.

THE BURLAP
SACK

This sack beating goes out to the rowing team for their high-pressure recruiting tactics.

Yesterday (11 January), I was walking through SUB quietly minding my business when I was accosted by a small collection of students sitting behind a table.

They dragged me by the arm to their recruiting station, forced a pen into my hand and scrawled a large X. When I told them that it looked like a sign-up sheet and not a contract they became confused and tried to grab me again.

Seeing that I was more glib than they anticipated they changed tactics and told me I "looked like a rower." When this empty flattery failed to sway me, they threatened my mother.

So hop into the sack, rowers. Let's see you cox your way out of this one.

TIM PEPPEIN

The Burlap Sack is a semi-regular feature where a person or group who needs to be put in a sack and beaten is ridiculed in print. No sack beatings are actually administered.

SPORTS

sports@gateway.alberta.ca • Thursday, 12 January 2006

Bears volleyball team uses Cali to warm up for Calgary



SIGHTS SET HIGH The Bears volleyball team has handled most of their competition easily this year. FILE PHOTO: BEN RILEY

ROBIN COLLUM
Sports Staff

They may have spent part of their holiday riding the roller coasters in Disneyland, but the U of A men's volleyball squad is staying grounded. Despite winning all of their matches during a tour of California last week, the Bears refuse to feel overconfident about the rest of their season, even their upcoming meeting with the underdog Calgary Dinos.

The Bears have returned from California, having played and beat UC Irvine, UC Santa Barbara and Long Beach State, at the time the eighth-, sixth-, and third-ranked teams in the US, respectively.

"The objective of the trip was to get back in the rhythm of playing again," said Bears head coach Terry Danyluk. "I looked at it as an opportunity to adapt to someone, rather than knowing a lot about the team."

Second-year Bear Alex Gaumont-Casias and fifth-year Leo Carroll both echoed their coach's sentiment, emphasising the trip as a learning experience as well as a holiday.

"It was a lot of fun," said Carroll. "We had some good competition down there, and came back with a few more wins for our record."

"We met a different style of volleyball and I think we got better; the team really came together," said Gaumont-Casias. "The game against Long Beach was a great game and we worked hard."

There were technical differences that the U of A had to adapt to as well. In the United States, each game is played to 30 points, rather than the CIS custom of 25. Nonetheless, the Bears more than held their own against some highly ranked competition. Danyluk was proud of his team's play, but seemed disappointed at how much they dominated the American teams.

"They were all good teams, but I thought Santa Barbara would be a little better than they were," he said. "They had one player who is supposed to be a phenom. He played okay, but didn't have

as good a match as he's had in the past, I'm told. Long Beach was a very good team," he added. "We won that match 3-1, and it was the best match we played."

No matter what the competition in California, Danyluk and his team feel well-equipped to handle whatever the rest of the season, and post-season, brings them.

The Bears will meet the 2-10 Calgary Dinos this weekend in the Main Gym. While the Dinos haven't been able to get a win against the Bears yet this season, Danyluk insists that his team won't be taking anything for granted.

"Calgary's got some pretty good athletes, they just struggle putting really good matches together," said Danyluk. "The trouble with this conference is that anybody can do that on any given day."

"It's a constant progression from the beginning of the year. We just keep getting better, and if things keep going this way, Calgary had better be ready. Because we are."

ALEX GAUMONT-CASIAS

"We need to serve tough, and if we can do that, then, defensively we're pretty good," he said, explaining the Bears' game plan. "That puts teams under a lot of pressure."

His team didn't seem to be showing any nerves going into the match-up either, sure that the work they have put in will pay off for them this weekend, and hopefully through to the play-offs in March.

"It's a constant progression from the beginning of the year. We just keep getting better, and if things keep going this way, Calgary had better be ready," said Gaumont-Casias. "Because we are."

Volleyball Pandas putting recent losses behind them, focussing on Dinos

ANDREW RINFREE
Sports Staff

Things were looking fairly rosy for the Pandas volleyball team as 2005 drew to a close. Alberta had won nine out of ten conference games, and was ranked as the nation's second-best women's volleyball team. The Pandas looked poised to roll into the new year leading the Canada West Division, but the Trinity Western Spartans burst Alberta's bubble with back-to-back victories one week into 2006.

TWU was ranked eighth in the country when they handed the Pandas 3-2 and 3-0 losses on consecutive nights, dropping Alberta's conference record to 9-3 on the year. The Spartans may have been underdogged at the start of the season, but their success over Alberta has garnered them a first-place spot in the Canada West Division.

"I wouldn't want to take anything away from Trinity; they're a better team than most people are giving them credit for," said Pandas head coach Laurie Eisler. "My experience, whenever we've played them in their home gym, is that they've played really well. There's no shame, necessarily, in losing to [Trinity Western], but we also didn't play very well. The good news is that we saw it early enough to be able to make corrections."

Alberta will be looking at this upcoming weekend against the University of Calgary Dinos as an opportunity to bounce back from the disappointing matches they had to start the year. Eisler says that her squad is eager to get back on the court, and that the matches this weekend could have a big impact on the division's final standings.

"We wouldn't want a bye right now; we want to get back on the court, exercise some of those demons and get some good feelings back," she said. "There is a potential for either team [this

weekend] to create some separation in the standings with two wins—a split keeps us close together still."

Any Battle of Alberta is guaranteed to be heated, but Eisler says that the rivalry between the Pandas and Dinos is tough to tame, fuelled by the fact the Pandas have often played second fiddle to the Dinos in recent years at the CIS national championships: Calgary captured the 2004 gold medal, besting the favoured Pandas 3-1 in the final. It was the same story in 2005, as the Dinos beat the Pandas in the Canada West championship 3-0, and then bumped Alberta off of the medal podium a few weeks later with a 3-1 victory to claim the bronze medal.

"Calgary is a very good team that is always tough to play," Eisler said, adding that it has been frustrating playing against this strong Calgary team the last couple of years. "We have a healthy respect for [the Dinos] and we know that we can never look past them. We're two strong teams fairly close geographically, so we make each other better. Someone's got to be the loser, and we've had our fair share of the losses over the last couple of years and certainly that's motivation this weekend—a lot of pride is on the line."

Despite suffering two unexpected losses, the Pandas have a couple of cards up their sleeves against the Dinos this upcoming weekend. Alberta played their southern rivals in two regular-season matches in mid-November and won them 3-0 and 3-1. Another advantage for Alberta this weekend is that Calgary will be playing without two-time CIS MVP Joanna Niemczewska, who suffered a knee injury this summer. Dinos head coach Kevin Boyles announced earlier this weekend that Niemczewska would not compete for the remainder of the season due to her injury.



MOVING FORWARD The Pandas volleyball team was taken by surprise by Trinity Western recently. FILE PHOTO: WEIYANG LIU

"I coached Joanna one summer with the National B team," said Eisler. "She's an outstanding athlete and has really frustrated us for the last four years. The one consolation I take is that she played on the Canadian National A-team this summer and frustrated the Cubans and the Americans, so it's not just us that have had trouble with her."

If history is any indication, the Pandas and Dinos will likely clash again this year in the national finals, which will be held in Calgary this year. This weekend's matches will be the last time the Battle of Alberta heats up on the volleyball court before the post-season.

Opening serve will be at 6:15 tomorrow night and 8:15 Saturday in the Main Gym.



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TEST TIME The Bears hockey team is back in action this weekend as they host the Manitoba Bisons for a pair of games. FILE PHOTO: MIKE SLATNIK

Sorochan and hockey Bears ready for Bisons

ROSS PRUSAKOWSKI
Sports Staff

With the start of the winter semester, students across campus are feeling the pressure, but no one is facing it as much as the Golden Bears hockey team as the second-half of the season gets underway. Welcoming the rest of the CIS to their home ice when they host nationals in March is bound to be stressful enough, but as defending national champions, Alberta will have a little more weight on their shoulders, as they hope to be back in the gold medal game at Rexall Place.

Should the Bears get there again this year, it shouldn't surprise anyone if the goalie minding the Bears net was last seen in that building sporting the colours of the Edmonton Oilers.

"I was an Oilers season ticket holder for 17 years," said first-year Bears goaltender and Edmonton native Aaron Sorochan.

That fact wouldn't make him stand out in a diarch hockey market like Edmonton, where any number of fans could say the same thing: the fact that he was selected by the Oilers to participate in their training camp this fall and given a chance to land a pro contract after coming off of five years playing in the Western Hockey League does.

"Being part of the training camp was something special and I think that's all you can say. Not too many kids get to try out for an NHL team and I was one of those few kids who

could and who grew up watching the Oilers. To sit in that dressing room was something really special."

While the Oilers eventually released the 2004/05 WHL Eastern Conference Goalie of the Year and first-team all-star, their loss has been the Bears' gain, as Sorochan has settled comfortably into a starting role with the third-ranked Bears. However, this wasn't until after he made his first appearance in front of the Clare Drake faithful—while wearing the opponent's jersey during the Oilers rookie game.

"Not too many kids get to try out for an NHL team and I was one of those few kids who could and who grew up watching the Oilers."

AARON SOROCHAN
GOLDEN BEARS GOALIE

"It was weird," laughed Sorochan. "I didn't think my first game in that arena would be on the visitor's bench."

From his stellar pre-season performance against the NCAA's highly touted University of Minnesota to his shutting down of the Calgary Dinosaurs last weekend, where he stopped 55 of the 58 shots he faced, Sorochan and teammate Blake Grenier have become

one of the best goaltending tandems in CIS. If not for the steady goaltending they've provided for an Alberta team who's "bread and butter" is defence, according to head coach Eric Thurston, the Bears would be much further from the top of the Canada West standings than their current second-place.

"Both of our goalies have played very well, and [Sorochan] has been tremendous," said Thurston. "Your goaltender is your best penalty killer, and when teams dump the puck into our zone, [Sorochan] does a good job of being quick to get out of his net and clearing the puck back out. He also gives up very few rebounds, and if there is one, it's usually sitting in the corner and our defencemen are able to play it."

Having a goaltender with that rebound control has been a massive advantage for an injury-depleted Bears team who managed to ice a full roster for practice on Monday for the first time since the beginning of the season. That bodes well for their weekend series when they welcome the University of Manitoba to town for games on Friday and Saturday. The games this weekend also provide Sorochan, the Canada West athlete of the week, an opportunity to improve his reputation and establish himself as one of the top goalies in CIS.

The Bears will face-off with the Bisons on Friday and Saturday night at 7:30pm at Clare Drake Arena.

Point-counterpoint: Major League Baseball's playoff format

Baseball regular season is too long, playoffs too short



ANDREW
RENFREE

Point

There are a lot of special things about the month of October—it's the only time of the year where it's acceptable to dress up in drag and stand calmly from children. It also happens to be the month that the World Series is played. Now, while not everyone lusts for baseball as much they used to, sports fans can recognize a thrilling sporting event when we see it. The only problem is that the excitement of the MLB playoffs is short-lived and needs to be altered to include more teams.

Some people find it difficult to sit through nine innings of America's pastime, let alone 162 games in a season. However, at the risk of a verbal thrashing from baseball purists, I'm willing to say that the World Series should be expanded to include 16 teams like the NHL and NBA playoffs do. Look at it this way—of the eight teams that made the baseball playoffs last year, five returned this year, meaning that only three new teams made it. Not only is that rather redundant, but it also excludes teams from the playoffs that are good, but not that good. Consider the Blue Jays, for example. They had a decent season this year, but because division rivals Boston and New York purchased a perennial playoff berth, the Jays didn't have a hope in hell. If you were a Blue Jays fan, why would you even bother watching baseball?

Mr. Owen may argue that the current World Series format results in the most competitive games because only the top teams participate. However, I would point out that the current format doesn't even guarantee that the best teams play in October. Baseball could at least award the best four teams from the American League and National League with a playoff spot. In the 2005 season, the top four teams in the AL did make the playoffs, but in the NL the Padres made it, despite the fact that the Phillies, Marlins, and Mets all played better during the regular season. This disproves the argument that the current baseball playoff format is the most competitive because the division leaders always make the playoffs, while better teams are forced to watch from their living rooms. If the Yankees, Blue Jays,

Red Sox, and Orioles are the best four teams in the American League, then they should make the playoffs, despite being in the same division. In hockey, two seasons before the lockout, the Oilers, Canucks, Avalanche and Wild, all of whom play in the northwest division, made the playoffs. Hockey's format allows teams to focus on their record versus the whole conference, not just the division.

Baseball's playoff format severely limits the chance of an underdog making it to the World Series.

Baseball's playoff format severely limits the chance of an underdog making it to the World Series. Consider the last three years in the NHL playoffs, where Carolina, Anaheim, and Calgary all came within a public hair of winning the Stanley Cup. This wouldn't have happened if hockey had the format that MLB employs.

To compensate for an extended playoff and to ensure that baseball isn't a year-long spectacle, MLB could shorten the regular season by 20 games. The proportion of playoff to regular season games is much lower in baseball than it is in other professional sports. The MLB playoffs account for about 10 per cent of the total games played. The NHL, NBA and NFL seasons, on the other hand, consist of about 25 per cent of playoffs. The post-season is the most exciting part of any sport, so increasing its length while decreasing the excruciatingly long regular season would make baseball more enjoyable. Inter-divisional games are competitive and hot tickets for fans, but do the Jays really have to play the Yankees 18 times in a season? Division rivals could play each other 15 or 16 times and that would free up about twelve games. Also, Toronto could give up three of nine games against weaker American League rivals such as Kansas City, Seattle or Detroit. This would free up another nine games, more or less equaling an extended playoff.

Expanding the World Series could make it the best sporting event of the fall season, but in all honesty, a game that's been around for more than 100 years isn't likely to change. I guess next Halloween I'll have to don my wig again and steal treats from the youngsters.

Bigger playoffs just means more losers; keep things the same



PAUL
OWEN

Counterpoint

So let me get this straight, Mr. Renfree. You think that baseball needs to have more teams in their playoffs. You're trying to tell me that half the teams in the league need to make the post-season. You believe that this will lead to a more competitive league, where the bubble teams lose to those Yankees and Red Sox every single year. Pub-lease, heavy on the "Pub."

If you're looking for a way to increase parity, a quick fix like expanding the playoffs isn't the answer. After all, if there is such a talent gap between the haves and have-nots that half the playoff teams can be pencilled in before the start of the season, then those pencillable teams should just win their first round series anyways. The 63 per cent of returning teams to the playoffs isn't even that different from the 16-team playoff leagues that you crave to emulate. In 2004/05, 69 per cent of NBA teams made their second-straight playoff appearance, and in 2003-04, 75 per cent of NHL teams returned to the post-season.

In fact, by maintaining their elitist playoff schedule, the league is in fact encouraging teams to make themselves more competitive. I highly doubt the 80-82 Blue Jays would be facing a payroll increase from \$50 million to \$80 million if they had been able to slide into the playoffs by consistently finishing third in their division, 10-15 games back. Maybe there's a problem with the fact that you need to spend \$80 million to make the playoffs, but the implementation of a salary cap would be a much more effective way to fix this, not to mention a better long-term option for the game.

A longer playoff schedule would also mess with baseball's already ungently season. The season already stretches from late February—when pitchers and catchers report to training camp—to late October, and that's not even including the offseason ball that some of them play. 162 games is a long schedule as well, but the elimination of games isn't really a viable

option. The unbalanced schedule and inter-league play are two things that the fans want. They create better rivalries and match-ups. The fact that the Yankees and Red Sox play 20 times a year is one of the factors that makes the last weekend of the season mean something. Neither New York nor Boston would have played with as much desperation during the last weekend if they were both already free and clear into the playoffs.

Maybe there's a problem with the fact that you need to spend \$80 million to make the playoffs, but the implementation of a salary cap would be a much more effective way to fix this, not to mention a better long-term option for the game.

Maybe sometimes an injustice such as San Diego making the playoffs this season will happen, but these same things are bound to happen in a larger playoff tree as well: division winners always make the playoffs. Teams that didn't belong were mercilessly spanked in the first round. They had underdog potential, and were fun to watch through the season, but when it came down to running with the big guns, they didn't have the talent to make it. Bottom line, they don't belong in the post-season.

Also, baseball's playoffs, unlike hockey's, eliminates the underdog effect. All you need is one hot goalie to win in the NHL playoffs, whereas you need to have two great pitchers on your team to win the World Series. If you had what it takes to be a good playoffs MLB team, you have what it takes to make it there. Add this to the fact that the underdog—or wildcard—has won the last three World Series, including Boston's miraculous comeback in 2004 and Florida's stunning of the Yankees in 2001, and you have a great set-up that makes it possible for some surprises along the way. The playoff system isn't broke; why should we waste our time trying to fix it?

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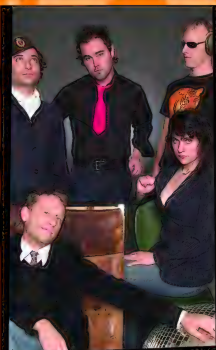
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GRAPPLING WITH NEW CHALLENGES The Bears and Pandas wrestling teams will be in action at home this weekend.

Wrestlers ready for weekend competition

ANDREW RENFREE
Sports Staff

As Canadian politicians battle for votes in the upcoming election, University of Alberta wrestlers have been battling on the mat in preparation for the U of A Invitational and Golden Bear Open tournaments this weekend in the Buttermere.

While Alberta has had several tournaments on the road this season, this weekend will mark the first time that the Pandas and Bears will get a chance to grapple on their own mats. Competing in front of a home crowd is a welcome relief for Alberta head coach Yang Ioannides, who notes that the Bears have performed decently this season, but a young Pandas team has struggled in the early going.

"I was pretty excited about the performance of the men's team in the first half of the year, but our women's team is really, really young and hasn't performed as well as I had hoped," Ioannides said. "We've got a lot of work to do [on the women's side] and it'll be a fairly challenging year."

Most of the 2005/06 Alberta women's wrestling roster is in their first year of CIS eligibility, with only Jennifer Obst having any experience wrestling at the university level. Last season, the Pandas recorded an impressive fourth-place finish, mostly because of Erica Sharp and Heidi Kulak, who won gold and silver medals, respectively. Both are no longer eligible to wrestle at the university level, but they have each transitioned into assistant coaching roles this season for the Pandas. Ioannides looks to these veterans to

provide guidance for his inexperienced team.

"We need to have some of our leaders on the women's side step up and say, 'Look girls, this is how it's done.' I'm looking to Heidi Kulak and Erica Sharp to kind of pull the girls along," said Ioannides. "Erica just returned from knee surgery, so I'm expecting that just having her back in the room will really help the girls to recognize what it takes to progress at this level."

Both Sharp and Kulak are still competing for the U of A club team this year. Club athletes will be competing this weekend against other clubs from across the country in the Golden Bear Invitational, which will take place on Saturday. Many of the participants in that tournament are national-calibre athletes and perhaps even future Olympians. Despite the fact that Sharp and Kulak don't still compete at the varsity level, Ioannides says that they are strong role models for the Pandas.

"A lot of the girls on our team are trying to make the transition from high school wrestling, or from not having wrestled in a couple of years. At this level, you have to be tough and tenacious and those are two things that Erica Sharp and Heidi Kulak are," he said.

Both the Bears and Pandas will be heading into this weekend short-handed. A flu bug has been circulating and some of the wrestlers may be unable to compete. To make matters worse, two Bears have decided to opt out of the remaining tournaments, leaving two weight classes empty.

Ioannides says that this is the time of year when the athletes decide whether to continue wrestling because they can compete in two tournaments without using up a year of eligibility. Despite the depleted rosters, the 14-year head coach looks at the U of A Invitational as a chance for some of his young athletes to get valuable CIS experience.

"I expect that the people who have experience will do well this weekend and for some of the others who are just gaining experience it's really about getting as many matches as possible," he said. "The minimum our varsity athletes will get is five matches and some guys could get as many as twelve. To get that kind of volume is really important for us, especially because we're basically one month from the Canada West championships. Obviously we'd prefer to win every weight class, but what's important to us this weekend is gaining the experience."

The U of A Invitational will also mark the return of Bears captain Jared Wall, who has spent the last few months travelling and taking an outdoor education course in New Zealand. Regardless of how Alberta fares this weekend, Ioannides is confident it will be exciting for fans, who are invited to attend the matches Saturday through Sunday free of charge.

"[Fans will] see the highest calibre of wrestling that they are ever going to see in Edmonton this weekend. If anybody wants to have some fun for a couple of hours on Friday or Saturday night they can come in and watch something that will be a little bit different from the average spectator sport."

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Kobe, what have you done to yourself?



CHRIS
O'LEARY

Sports
Commentary

Dear Kobe Bryant,
You may not remember me, but back in the day we were pretty tight. I was there when you were a kid and your dad was bouncing around the league as a player in the NBA. I saw the way you looked when you watched him playing and I heard you tell all the other kids on your block that your Dad was the best basketball player in the world. I was also there when you would tell yourself that you were going to be like your Dad when you grew up.

I remember how you couldn't bring yourself to look at the kids on your block when your Dad finished his final season in the NBA; he wasn't the best in the world, after all. Fortunately, you didn't have to deal with those kids, because you and your family moved to Italy, the next stop in your Dad's basketball career.

Across the ocean, things were cool for the next few years. Your father was a star, playing for some of the nation's top pro teams. You learned how to tell your new friends that your Dad was the best in a new language; and when you picked up the ball, people saw something special in you too.

When you were about to start junior high, the Bryant family packed their bags and you all moved back to Philly, the city you were born in. Through the next five years, thanks to your drive and ability with the ball in your hands, your name would surpass that of your father's by the time you were a senior in high school.

Maybe that was part of the problem. Maybe you had too much success, too much media attention too soon. I remember sitting in front of the TV with you, watching the replay of the McDonald's All-American High School Game in '96 and how the announcers made you the show's headline. They called you the next big thing, and as you proceeded to steal the show, they called you a lock in this year's draft, if you chose to skip out on college.

In hindsight, that may have been a mistake too. Physically, you were there; your body and skills had skipped college at some point in high school—that much was obvious. It wasn't like the academic side of school gave you any trouble either; I mean, you graduated with a 3.3 GPA from Lower-



BRIGHTER DAYS Coming out of high school, the world was Kobe Bryant's.

Merton High, a posh prep school in the Philly 'burbs. But Duke and lessons in life from coach Krzyzewski were never an option to you.

It was in the weeks that led up to the 1996 draft that I started to wonder about you, Kobe. Rumours circulated that you'd be drafted by Charlotte. You objected, saying if they picked you, you'd demand a trade. Sure enough, with the 13th pick, you became a Hornet. Shortly after, you were dealt to LA. When the word came through to your family, aka the Bryant Camp, a satisfied grin stretched across your face. You always liked getting what you want.

As the success came through your pro career, you continued to worry me. Your skills blossomed, and while you picked up three championships in three years, it was like each one meant less and less to you. Sure, winning was good and all, but having all the credit (and MVP awards) go to Shaquille O'Neal was becoming more insulting with every year you improved. When the team was its most loaded, and failed to win that elusive fourth

championship in five years, you'd had enough. It was here that you and I parted ways.

Over the last two seasons, I've watched from afar. I've watched you drive your teammate, the most dominant player of this basketball era, from Venice Beach to Miami. I saw your coach, the one who guided you to all of your championships, leave the team out of frustration. I've watched you physically take the ball out of teammates' hands just to force up a shot over triple-teams; though I've got to admit, it does look extra-nice when you hit it over that many defenders. I've watched you have 30-point quarters, 40-, 45-, 50-, even 62-point games—and I've watched your team flounder in mediocrity the entire time. It's not too late, Kobe. If you ever want to think of someone other than yourself and your place in the record books, I'd gladly come back to work with you. I'd have to, actually. It's my job.

Sincerely,
Your last shred of decency.

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World juniors gets the red carpet treatment from Canadian fans



ROSS
PRUSAKOWSKI

Sports
Commentary

It has become a tradition that manages to unite families and an entire nation in front of TV screens each and every Christmas. It shows us that while Canadians are completely indifferent towards our political leaders and their visions for the country during December, the quest of 23 teenagers for gold and glory can seize our attention like nothing else. But this year the World Junior Hockey Championships had an added fuel, as it returned to Canadian soil for the first time in three years.

Make no mistake though; it's only Canadians that afford hockey—especially the World Juniors—such a special place in our national consciousness. One only needs to notice the attention (or lack thereof) the tournament received in its brief stint beyond our borders and the show Vancouver put on this year to appreciate this.

When it wasn't held on Canadian soil, the tournament managed to attract the same level of interest that Canadians accord to arena football and cricket. If not for roving bands of Canadians looking to watch their team going for gold in North Dakota last year, the arena there would have been devoid of fans and atmosphere.

Things are a tad different in Canada, even when the tournament is being staged in a city where you're more likely to find ice in your drinks than on the ground. In Vancouver, people packed the stands, with no fewer than 8000 people watching games between noted international hockey powerhouses Switzerland and Norway intently, taking sides and booing the officials' decisions. This was repeated nightly, even if Canada wasn't on the program. However, when Canada was

playing, the true passion we have for hockey as a country was on display.

Despite start times more suited to matinee kids on the silver screen than junior stars on an ice rink—all so TSN could cater to Eastern TV audiences—hardly a ticket could be found in Vancouver to any of the Canadian games. These games took on a carnival atmosphere, as fans from across the country sat together, draped in various versions of team Canada sweaters (along with a few misguided souls wearing Vancouver Canucks jerseys), drank, cheered and jeered the games together. The entire arena brimmed with nervous energy before every puck drop, keenly aware that this "less-talented" edition of team Canada would be in touch to capture gold.

The "elbow heard 'round Vancouver" also ensured that the crowd's two favourite teams in the medal round were Canada and whoever was playing the US.

Yet, as round-robin play progressed and the home side managed to dispatch tenacious Finland, a Jamaican-bosomed team-esque Norway squad and a Swedish side that seemed partial to keeping play in the neutral zone, the confidence among the Canadian hockey faithful grew. After every win, fans emptied nightly from the antiquated Pacific Coliseum feeling a high not matched by anything sold on the city's street corners and talking about Canadian hockey.

The tournament managed to capture the imagination of the city despite the fact that the first few games were played by officiating so terrible fans took to booing penalties called against Norway—even while these calls put Canada on the powerplay. Tight officiating

that stifled the play wasn't what the fans were paying for, and there were more than a few disgruntled patrons in attendance after the first few games. Then came the New Year's Eve meeting with the US, a game that stifled complaints about the officiating and illustrated exactly why this tournament captures Canada's attention like nothing else over the holidays.

It was a game full of current and future NHL first-round draft picks, and it was hockey at its finest, full of big hits, spectacular goals and astonishing displays of skill. In the stands, fans cheered and chanted for its team with one voice and celebrated a Canadian victory with a decibel level more often associated with the detonation of a bomb. This was a reaction that the Americans must have been used to by the end of the round-robin, as the crowds celebrated every goal against them as if they were an overtime winner, while US goals and wins were received in exam-hall silence.

This would have been the only reaction the US would have received from the stands the whole tournament, if not for the dirty elbow from US defence-man (and moody singer) Jack Johnson in response to Canada's empty-net goal that marred a game that was poetry on ice. But, because of the elbow, Johnson would be booed heartily for the rest of the tournament, receive a standing ovation with every trip to the penalty box and the US would draw the ire of Canadian fans. The "elbow heard 'round Vancouver" also ensured that the crowd's two favourite teams in the medal round were Canada and whoever was playing the US.

While this animosity towards the Americans didn't prevent them from making the semi-final, they would go no further, falling to Russia 5-1 and missing out on the bronze medal thanks to a plucky effort from Finland.

The American meltdown did give the fans the last laugh and comment on the US effort in the tournament though, as they sent the Americans back across the border to a few courses



GOOD FOR GOLD Team Canada got the backing of a nation over the holidays.

of the "Goodbye Song" and chants of "overated." The Americans were the only team to receive this treatment; every other squad received honest ovations for their hits, goals and awards, as the fans showed they can adopt nations like Finland as though they were wearing the maple leaf on the front of their jerseys, demonstrating that Canadian hockey fans appreciate good plays and talent from around the world, but detest poor sportsmanship.

In the end, though, what Canadian fans value most of all is gold around their players' necks and their flag being raised to the rafters. After more than 28 games in ten days and a 50/50 draw worth \$72 000, they got their wish. Canada trounced Russia 5-0 before a crowd of 18 000 red-and-white-clad fans at GM Place to capture the gold and create a moment so powerful that some in the stands were left

shedding tears. A previously unknown crop of teenagers showed the power of the Canadian jersey as the win united a nation and arena, as people whose only connection were adjacent seats celebrated together like old friends and as one, belted out what may be the worst rendition of the national anthem ever sung.

Poor group singing, however, was overlooked in light of the results of the championship game. Canada was golden for the second straight year and that was all that mattered and will be remembered long after the days of TV and newspaper coverage bemoaning the lack of talent on the team have faded into history. Or at least until next December, when once again a nation turns its eyes to a band of teenagers and expects gold in a tournament the rest of the world overlooks.

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7uestlove

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Cadence Weapon and DJ Weaz-el
Thursday, 12 January at 8pm
Starlite Room

Give a few children some rattling toys, and they'll be entertained for hours; give some rappers and DJs a whole stage, and they'll entertain an audience into the wee hours of the morning.

The Starlite Room is playing host to 7uestlove and a multitude of renowned artists this evening. 7uestlove—which is, indeed, how you spell his name—has been around for a number of years, and over the course of his career, the Roots member has managed to form a solid reputation as a multi-talented producer, drummer and DJ, talents he'll be showcasing tonight. With this impressive list of credentials, 7uestlove's performance is bound to instantly shake off the back-to-school blues.



Mobile

with Armchair Cynics
Saturday, 14 January at 8pm
The Powerplant

If you want to end your first week back with a musical bang, make sure you catch Mobile live at the Powerplant this upcoming Saturday.

The Montréal-based quintet is currently touring across Canada, and they're burning up the brown, snow-lacking grass in their tracks. With their hit single "Montreal Calling" dominating airwaves and their amazing ability to scoop up top label companies, mixers and producers for their record, the show is guaranteed to be a good way to kick off your 2006 concert season.

The Glass Menagerie

Written by Tennessee Williams
5–21 January at 8pm
Catalyst Theatre

Remember that Simpsons episode where they decide to do a version of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*? "Can't you hear me yell! You're putting me through hell!" Stella! Remember? Then you'll have to check out Catalyst Theatre's production of Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*.

The play centres on a shy and innocent young girl, her independence-seeking brother, and their mother who, although she seems to control her children's personal lives, is only trying to look out for their best interests. Tennessee Williams' classic script is incredibly character-focused, making each director's interpretation of the character's different.

Although this version of *The Glass Menagerie* really has nothing to do with the Simpsons, it's interesting to note that, if the almighty Watt Groening can incorporate Williams work into his infamous shows, then this renowned playwright must be able to write some damn good plays.

AMANDA ASH
Arts & Entertainment Wizard

Emo is from Mars, punk-rock is from Mercury

Edmonton punk rockers Our Mercury return to prominence with their latest album, *From Below*

Our Mercury

with The Points Situation and Rocky Fortune
Saturday, 14 January at 8pm
Sidetrack Café

MICHAEL LABROQUE
Entertainment Editor

When a local band decides to pack up for the big city, they're usually on to bigger or better things, set to return either on tour or with their guitar cases tucked between their legs. For Edmonton-based punk group Our Mercury, however, their year-long excursion to Montréal in 2000 resulted in a return to Edmonton that was neither an admitted defeat nor a triumphant homecoming. Since their return, however, they've scored some of their biggest successes to date.

"We were going to school when we there," says Our Mercury frontman Ben Stevenson. "And it was difficult to find time for studies, play shows and practice. Montréal was way more segmented, so if there was even a little bit of difference in your sound with another band, you would never play a show with them. It wasn't like the 'home' feeling we have here. That was the Montréal experience. We enjoyed it, but decided to come back here."

Stevenson, along with fellow bandmates Eric Bauld, John Watson and Daniel Laxer, are no rookies to the trials of being in a band. Stevenson and Watson were members of the Edmonton youngsters Misdemeanor, a punk band whose popularity in the mid- to late-'90s led to multiple recording efforts and cross-Canada tours. Now in their early 20s, the fact that these musicians have been making music since their early teens have made for relatively seasoned musicians amongst bands who are, for the most part, just starting out.

"I think a lot of bands that get together in the years after high school and college expect certain things, and in general expect a lot more from



the whole experience," says Stevenson. "It's been so long for us that I think we have a really sort of balanced outlook in it, a very sort of humble approach to it. We don't have any ideas of our record being huge or this and that. It would be nice to play to a crowd each night all over the country, but it's not something that we think is easy to come by, and not something that would deter us from doing this if it didn't happen."

But while Our Mercury might not yet be causing cross-Canada pandemonium, the group is still managing to make a name for themselves and quickly expanding outside of Edmonton and onto the national scene. After signing to Smallman Records in 2005, Our Mercury began to prepare for a national release, this February's *From Below*, the first record for the band that would be put out across Canada with significant

support from a label funding their endeavor.

"There was a different mentality because of it," admits Stevenson. "We were a lot more careful to keep them short and from getting away from themselves—making every little moment matter instead of drawing it out."

After years of fine-tuning their musicianship and their latest effort set to drop at the end of February, Stevenson is hoping fans recognize the effort the band has put into creating a refined, if not overly polished product.

"I think there are a lot of records out nowadays that are really polished, but in a cheap sense. We don't tune the vocals or edit the drums—none of that stuff. To me, it was a really an effort to come up to a finished feel to things, you know. From start to finish that was in my mind and I think this record turned out really well."

Third world labour highlighted in *Workingman's Death*

Workingman's Death

Directed by Michael Glawogger
13–16 September at 7pm
Metro Cinema

EDMON ROTEA
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Watching a *Workingman's Death* is kind of like experiencing a National Geographic photo essay. Not only will viewers see a close account of a typical workday in the developing world, but viewers will also be exposed to the vivid imagery associated with the dangers and perils that the working classes can experience on a daily basis.

Michael Glawogger's documentary depicts the extent of human survival by showcasing manual labour jobs from around the world—jobs that are strenuous, backbreaking and dangerous.

The film, despite a lack of narration and context, provides audiences with a visual essay reflecting the state of manual labour in five different countries. Venues range from the cramped and claustrophobic coal mines of Ukraine, a mountainous sulfur volcano in Indonesia, the unsanitary open-air slaughterhouses of Nigeria, to the shipwreck dismantling yards of Pakistan, where one can easily fall to their death with one false step.

Societal views of labour are even discussed amongst steel workers in the People's Republic of China—views that parallel the optimism of 1950s post-war German steel workers—where manual labour was seen as a vehicle for achieving modernism, knowledge, technology, economic prosperity and a "better tomorrow."

Throughout the film, the audience is treated to scenes of beautiful cinematography and camera movements, movements that follow the workers as they spend endless hours toiling away at their labourious jobs to standstill portrait shots of



workers posing as if they were having their picture taken for a photograph. The scenery and camera angles are constantly changing, so there is never a dull moment as you watch the film.

However, *Workingman's Death* also comes with its caveats. Glawogger seems to have a fixation with imagery depicting the killing of goats, and the first half of a *Workingman's Death* is rich with such imagery. The film may make many viewers lose their appetite—or unable to stomach their popcorn—as they watch the ritual sacrifice of a goat in Indonesia to the slaughter of goats in Nigeria.

The film's visual accounts may be too unsettling for many viewers, especially those against animal cruelty. In one scene, such viewers may grow uncomfortable and horrified to discover that a cacophony of cries and shrieks don't emanate from the pleas of impoverished Nigerian chil-

dren, but actually belong to the dozens of young goats whose bodies slowly grow lifeless and limp as they are whipped, tortured, and bled to death after having their throats slit. This scene alone makes the documentary bloodier than most of the bloody B-grade horror movies—a scene that was unnecessarily too long, almost as if it was thrown in for pure shock value.

But then again, *Workingman's Death* isn't just social commentary about the state of manual labour and poverty in the modern world. It's a documentary that's also about survival; that man will do anything necessary to survive even if it includes enduring strenuous, back-breaking and dangerous labour. Mostly, though, it's about people's personal lives and their stories—about how the powerful sphere of work can influence both one's lifestyle and worldview.

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'Gang' flick Stryker strikes out

Stryker

Directed by Noam Gonick
Starring Kyle Henry, Deena Fontaine
and Ryan Black
13, 15 January at 9:20pm
Metro Cinema

ADAM GONIMONT
Arts & Entertainment Staff

According to its synopsis, *Stryker* is about the brutal turf wars and racial tensions in Winnipeg's North End. On screen, however, this film hardly accomplishes anything it sets out to. Furthermore, little, if any, context is given, leaving viewers unfamiliar with the setting fairly baffled. It soon becomes clear, however, that such context isn't necessary, as the story is completely unconvincing and unrealistic anyway.

There is a fine line between depicting real life and perpetuating stereotypes, and this movie often flirts with crossing it. For instance, the Asian gangsters (the "Flips," or Philipinos) all drive "pimped out" Honda Civics, while Mama Cece and her Indian Posse (both real-life gangs) are left to waddle around on foot—although they somehow still end up at their destinations at the same time. There are also the "hookers" and "hos," women and transgendered characters who are mere side-characters and sexual objects throughout.

Despite its attempts at realism, however, the film fails miserably at convincing viewers of the dire tensions and hostilities that threaten Winnipeg in real life. For one thing, the "gangs" in this movie all seem to have about five or six members each, with some topping out at seven or eight. What's more, they all hang out together at the same bar, and the "Flips" leader, the non-Philipino Omar, moonlights as a male pole-dancer. Even when they do clash, it's a matter of mere fistfights, with a pool cue or broken bottle

occasionally thrown into the mix. In fact, only three guns are produced throughout—none in serious confrontations—and the only time one is discharged is to destroy a beautiful 52-inch plasma TV, surely an unnecessary burden on what is clearly an extremely low production budget. Finally, although the gangsters all appear to be at least 20 years old, they get thrown into the "juvie" centre, where the unsupervised outside yard is separated from the rest of the world only by a scrawny chain-link fence, through which Mama Cece passes them packets of cocaine.

... this is, from the acting to the writing to everything in between, an embarrassingly amateurish production. Only one person in the movie—the embattled gang-leader Omar, played by Ryan Black—has any acting experience, and it shows. Ironically, however, Black is the worst actor in the movie.

The film attempts to show the harsh realities of gang life through the eyes of the eponymous Stryker, a nameless Native teenager who, one surmises from his self-appointed moniker, is attempting to gain entry and acceptance into whatever gang will allow him this opportunity. As such, one expects him to prove himself by committing crimes,

running drugs or otherwise proving his worth. Instead, he simply stands back and observes, mingling with impunity amongst the various rival gangs and occasionally lighting things on fire. In fact, he only has two lines the entire movie: "Stryker," when asked what his name is, and "no," when, in the closing scene, the filmmakers attempt to awkwardly insert one final aspect of Winnipeg life that they wish to comment on: police brutality towards natives.

If, as this film suggests, the native struggle for the reclamation of land is now only being played out in mindless gangland turf war, then it is a sad day for Canada. If this is a metaphor of the filmmakers' own creation, however, then it is a sad day for Canadian cinema. Either way, *Stryker* is unable to make any coherent social criticism, instead leaving viewers completely underwhelmed as to the severity of the situation in Winnipeg, which apparently pales to the situations in Toronto, Vancouver, or even Edmonton—and nobody's making a movie about how rough it is in E-town.

Make no mistake: despite being screened at an art-house theatre, this is, from the acting to the writing to everything in between, an embarrassingly amateurish production. Only one person in the movie—the embattled gang-leader Omar, played by Ryan Black—has any acting experience, and it shows. Ironically, however, Black is the worst actor in the movie. He's like a short, dark-skinned, less-convincing Vin Diesel, and delivers his lines like a badly dubbed Bruce Lee foe.

Films about gang-life such as *Menace to Society*, *City of God*, or even *Goodfellas* are compelling and legitimate because of their realism and tragedy. *Stryker*, on the other hand, displays none of these elements, and as a result is more like a dramatic version of *Trailer Park Boys*, only with fewer guns.

Tristan's realism conquers 'Hollywood polish'

Tristan & Isolde

Directed by Kevin Reynolds
Starring James Franco and
Sophie Myles
Opens Friday, 13 January

PATRICK ROSS
Arts & Entertainment Staff

If anything in film is currently as popular as medieval historical epics, it's certainly tragic romance. What with films like *Revenge of the Sith*, *Troy*, or *King Kong* (if you buy into the film's not-so-subtle overtones of monkey lovin'), *Romeo and Juliet*-style romances are currently all the rage. Enter *Tristan & Isolde*: the re-telling of an ancient British tale (also the one-time subject of an opera by Wagner).

Director Kevin Reynolds performs a precarious juggling act between the grim reality of the dark ages and traditional Hollywood polish. While the characters in the film are all gifted with absolutely perfect hair, the blood still flows openly and freely.

Tristan (James Franco) is an intense young man who early on in the film witnesses the murder of his father—who had attempted to unite the four tribes of Britain (Celt, Anglo, Saxon and Jutes)—by Irish raiders. Tristan is taken to live at Cornwall with Lord Marke, the prospective King of Britain, who raises him as his own son. Years later, when the Irish return and raze Cornwall, the film's tragic events begin to unfold.

Across the sea in Ireland, Isolde—



portrayed by the exquisite Sophie Myles—lives under the thumb of her father, King Donica. Donica is a ruthless, grim and inhuman man, consumed by a lust for power and tribute that borders on demonic. Isolde, however, is a warm and caring young woman, traits she credits to the influence of her mother.

It comes to pass that Isolde is betrothed to Donica's best general, a dark, brutish man who resorts to poisoning the blade of his sword to ensure that his opponents die. However, when Donica sends him to sack Cornwall, he unknowingly sends him to his death at the hand of Tristan.

Tristan, however, is afflicted with the man's poison, and is thought dead by his comrades. He is given

a Viking-esque king's funeral that fatefully deposits his not-quite-dead body on the shores of Ireland and in the hands of Isolde, who nurses him back to health.

What follows is a fairly formulaic love story, which is probably to be expected, as this is a tale that is fairly ancient in its own right, followed by a "love gone wrong due to mistaken identity" tale that is nearly as formulaic. In the end, the love shared by Tristan and Isolde threatens all they hold dear, which is probably a good thing, because there wouldn't be much a story to tell otherwise.

Director Kevin Reynolds performs a precarious juggling act between the grim reality of the dark ages and traditional Hollywood polish. While the characters in the film are

all gifted with absolutely perfect hair, the blood still flows openly and freely. For those hapless *Spider Man* geeks who are itching to see Franco (AKA Harry Osborne) do battle, your wish will be fulfilled in this movie.

All joking aside, *Tristan & Isolde* actually turns out pretty well. Its dizzying panoramic wide shots of Britain and Ireland establish an immediate sense of authenticity in the film's setting, and Franco manages to bring the same acting skills he showed in *Spiderman* and *The Great Raid* to this movie, which is notably different than anything he has yet performed in. It's no *Gladiator*, but it also stands well above other flops like *Troy* and *Kingdom of Heaven*, making *Tristan & Isolde* well worth seeing.



Ray J
Raydiation
Knockout Entertainment
www.rayj.com

RACHEL MWESIGYE
Arts & Entertainment Writer

There is a new breed of young R&B males taking over the music industry, but before them appeared on the charts, there was Ray J. A young veteran in this genre, Ray J's style brings back something fresh, filling a void that he left from his last two albums, and hits us with his newfound inspiration for the genre.

With his first single "One Wish" banging up the R&B charts, the singer who claims he does it all—raps, sings and embraces music as a whole—proves he can bring it. The opening club banger "Keep Sweating," featuring rap heavyweight Fat Joe, as well as the Timbaland produced "Unbelievable," make it apparent that the soul-singer/actor has matured from his last album, *This Ain't a Game*. Rhyming with growth and a vengeance on those two tracks, J proves that he has solidified his reputation as being a well-rounded lyricist.

Most notably, the collaborations on the album elevate the versatility Raydiation has to offer. The provocatively charged cut "Sexy," featuring Mya, stands out for its great instrumentals and is clearly geared at his adoring female fans. Also, a contribution by sister Brandy on the duet "War is Over" shakes up the album. With track names like "Melody," "Excite!" and "In the Mood," a poor choice of titles might be the only flaw left by Ray J on the album. Nevertheless, the great beats and lyrics makes Raydiation Ray J's best album to date.



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Wartime drama never felt so right

Mrs Henderson Presents

Directed by Stephen Frears
Starring Judi Dench, Bob Hoskins, Will Young, Kelly Reilly and Christopher Guest
Opens 13 January 2006

EDMON ROTEA
Arts & Entertainment Staff

These days, North American moviegoers have often lacked the opportunity to watch the light-hearted and witty British comedies that have entertained our English cousins for decades. Fortunately, motion picture distributors have answered the prayers of film lovers, and now that films from the UK are making it overseas faster than ever, the new comedy *Mrs Henderson Presents* will finally be enjoyed by audiences everywhere.

Mrs Henderson Presents tells the story of a wealthy English widow during the late 1930s, Laura Henderson; a character skillfully played by Dame Judi Dench, an actress best known to North American audiences for her recent role in *Pride & Prejudice* and as James Bond's boss "M" in the Brosnan films. Laura Henderson's character represents the typical archetype of the wealthy English widow: she may seem cold, rude, ignorant and eccentric at first, but at the core, she's a loving kind-hearted woman with noble intentions.

In a certain sense, the Windmill works as its own little world, an environment that in itself tells the story of wartime Britain as much as the world outside it.

With the recent loss of her husband, coupled with the loss of her son in WWI, Laura Henderson is left to live a lonely existence that lacks drama, action and adventure. She refuses to be relegated and restrained by the daily activities that are characteristic of a wealthy widow her age, especially activities such as knitting or committee work for charitable institutions. Instead, Henderson encounters the abandoned Windmill Theatre playhouse in London's downtown Westside—and makes the risky decision to purchase and restore the ruins to its former glory.

However, Henderson's must contend with the efforts of her bitter and reluctant stage manager, Vivian Van Damm (Bob Hoskins), a cautious control freak who is always conflicting with Henderson's character and



her radical—perhaps controversial—ideas. Her initial idea includes running continuous, back-to-back revues several times a day—an idea that initially leads to sold-out audiences, but is later copied by surrounding theatres, leading to audiences of empty seats.

In order to rejuvenate ticket sales, Henderson makes the decision to do what no English theatre has done before: have revues rich with frontal nudity. But Henderson must deal with Lord Cromer (Christopher Guest), a local politician who limits the on-stage movement of the nude actresses to artsy-like stationary poses. However, the nude-filled revues become a hit with male-dominated audiences, especially with curvaceous buxom bosom beauties like Maureen (Kelly Reilly) and the rest of the showgirls gracing the stage.

But all of a sudden, war breaks out and havoc erupts in the streets in London, and the future existence of the Windmill Theatre becomes questionable especially with German air raids continually bombing the city.

Mrs Henderson Presents is a touching story about optimism, courage and hope—not just for Henderson,

Damm, or the young showgirls—and it's also about maintaining the unbreakable English spirit in spite of the terrors of the German bombings, the heavy war casualties, and the physical and emotional chaos of the outside world.

Thus, the Windmill Theatre acts as a refuge for the characters and audiences—one that not only provides entertainment, but also protection, happiness and hope for those occupy it. In a certain sense, the Windmill works as its own little world, an environment that in itself tells the story of wartime Britain as much as the world outside it.

The Windmill Theatre is also very inviting on the inside, providing a rich visual experience for the both of the audiences. Movie lovers—especially those who are theatre fans as well—will be thrilled by the visuals, music, and hilarious performances as they watch the films numerous onstage revues on the silver screen. Like the stage shows found throughout *Mrs Henderson Presents*, the film itself is also full of drama, humour and adventure, as well as being in itself a tragic love story—one that will satisfy both film and live theatregoers.

Self Help Serenade, the debut album from Marjorie Fair, can be considered a rose among first-album thorns. Vocalist and guitarist Evan Slamka heads the band, and accompanied by Dain Luscombe on keys, Scott Lord on bass and Mike Delisa playing the drums, they've managed to produce an above average record.

Upon first listen, the album fills the body with feelings of repose and tranquility: the smooth vocals, and soothing organic key and guitar melodies bring almost a euphoric peace. As one becomes more familiar with *Self Help Serenade*, the music seems to generate an increasing impact on listeners. The harmony is calm, almost poignant on

some tracks; the vocals suggest tragedy in lines such as "they found him by the highway side / with blood-stained boots and glass in his eye," which appear in the song "Halfway House." While Slamka's lyrics lean toward misfortune and heartbreak, he is also clear on the fact that there will be a better tomorrow.

First released in the UK in 2004, *Self Help Serenade* was a hit overseas and was released just over a year later in the US. With radio friendly tracks such as the bands first single "Empty Room" and "Waves," Marjorie Fair is sure to make an impact on both the mainstream and indie scenes in the US and Canada alike.

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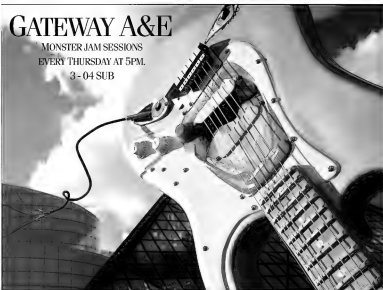
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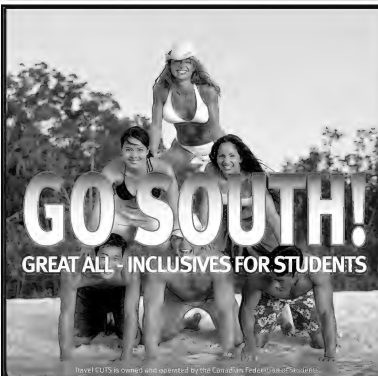
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JULIA DAVIS
Arts & Entertainment Writer

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Hoodwinked straddles line between fun and suck

Hoodwinked

Directed by Cory and Todd Edwards
Starring Glenn Close, Anne Hathaway,
James Belushi and Patrick Warburton
Opens 13 January

DANA KOMPERDO
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Thanks to Disney, the traditional fairy tales have, in one form or another, been made into movies, complete with straight-to-video sequels—so what's left? Production companies could get creative and actually come up with a new story, flush with moral lessons and talking inanimate objects, or, in a much easier move, they could twist a classic fairy tale into a slightly bastardized version of itself, a move that can be successful, but more often than not delivers mixed results.

That is just what directors and writers Cory and Todd Edwards did with their animated comedy *Hoodwinked*. Loosely based on the Little Red Riding Hood story, this version follows Red (Anne Hathaway), as her friends call her, as she is being interrogated by Detective Flippers and the rest of the forest police. Her grandmother's (Glenn Close) house has just been broken into, and as a rash of recipe thefts have taken place in the forest (yes, recipe thefts), the forest 5-0 are thinking that the so-called "goody bandit" is set to strike again.

A staggering number of forest dwellers apparently rely on their recipes for their livelihood, because before long "out of business signs" are being pounded into lawns and "closed" signs are flicked on. All the big players are potential suspects: Granny, potentially trying to gain a treat monopoly in the forest economy, the maniacal woodsman, Red herself, or the most obvious



suspect, the Big Bad Wolf, who has his bigness, badness and very wolfiness working against him. But he has his own side of the story, and after flashbacks show the story from the point of view of each suspect, the story unfolds to reveal who the real recipe bandit is, a not-so-surprising revelation if you've been paying attention. The anticipated ending plays out, and of course everyone learns their respective lesson and has an emotional moment—this is primarily children's movie after all.

Despite adding a new twist to an old story, *Hoodwinked* remains not only teetering on the side of contrived in the overall story, but also reserved in imagination in where it takes the revamped parts of the tale. But don't let this hold you back from going to see it; despite its predictability, the movie is a well-executed effort and a great choice even for older audiences, assuming they're

willing to relive a bit of their childhood.

A warning, though, to the faint of heart and those who are less in touch with their inner child: there is singing involved in this film. The songs aren't awful, but they're enough like *Pocahontas* to make it uncomfortable for more than a few minutes. They're the kind of songs that will make you cringe in embarrassment for those around you, but not rousing enough to make the eight children sitting behind you start dancing and trying to sing along in their high-pitched voices.

Hoodwinked is a funny, upbeat film, even though it doesn't stray far from its animated predecessors. If you can withstand the "cuteness" that comes with animated hijinks, *Hoodwinked* lands squarely in the animated middle ground: not the most original of creations, but still a funny, watchable film.

Gold Key Society Recognition Award



The Students' Union Gold Key Award was created by the Students' Union President Tevie Miller in 1950 and is intended to recognize the best on campus; those who contribute most to making the University of Alberta a better place through their outstanding work in extra-curricular activities. This honour is bestowed on those people who contribute greatly to the campus community.

All members of the campus community are eligible for the award with the exception of the Students' Union Executive. The Gold Key Awards Committee shall have the discretion to award a number of Gold Key Recognition Awards. Notwithstanding other involvements, participation in Student Government, Volunteer Activities, Student Organizations, Student Services, and Community Involvement may be considered.

Application deadline is January 25, 2006

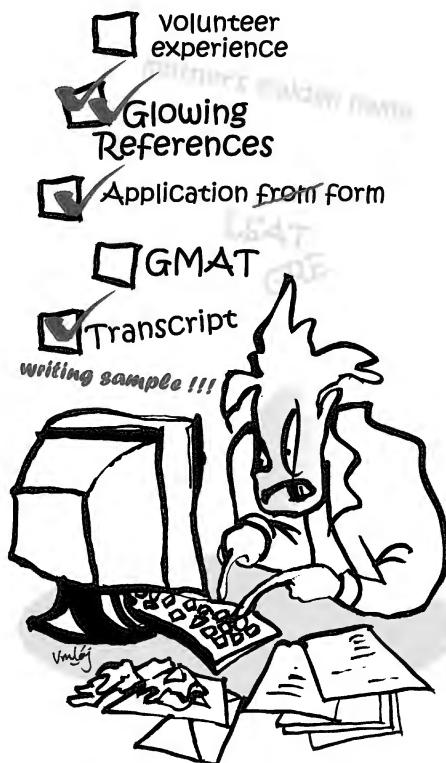
Applications available at all Info Booths, Faculty Offices,
2-900 SUB and online at www.su.alberta.ca/awards

For more information contact
492-4236 or ea@su.alberta.ca



Life after graduation

By Sarah Howard
The Campus (Bishop's University)



It's that time of year again, when third- and fourth- (or fifth- and sixth-) year students begin to feel the pressure that inevitably accompanies reflections on their impending graduation. While a lucky few will do some travelling and some will begin to busy themselves in "adult" occupations, more and more students will prolong their university careers by going to grad school.

LENNOXVILLE, QC (CUP)—Mulling over how the semesters flew by, and logically inferring that the next one will go by just as fast, now seems the ideal time for those planning to attend grad school who haven't actually submitted applications. It might not be too late. For those at least a year away from graduating, it is the perfect time to begin researching potential programs and the somewhat daunting application procedures. Believe me, you'll thank yourself for your forethought when you find yourself passing on an intermediary job in office administration/retail/food service in order to conduct some obscure research and establish yourself as an expert in some equally obscure field of study. That is, assuming you get accepted ...

So what, and who, does make the cut?

According to Julie Vaillancourt, Bishop's Career and Employment Counsellor, that isn't a simple question to answer.

First, it's important to realize that standards for selection can

vary significantly from school to school. That said, stellar transcripts, high-quality and relevant undergraduate coursework, glowing recommendation letters, a savvy letter of intent, a superb writing sample and off-the-chart GRE/GMAT/LSAT/MCAT scores will, obviously, clinch the deal. But for those who aren't sure what "GMAT" means, or whether acronyms and their identification will constitute a certain percentage of the GMAT's questions, the following is hopefully a helpful breakdown.

Transcripts are your academic records—the Richter scale of your academic performance. Obviously, the higher the numbers found on them are, the better. While there is no standard formula of admissions for all universities, it's a safe bet that most schools will definitely take the Grade Point Average (GPA) into consideration first. The good news is that most schools don't believe the GPA to be a sole indicator of a student's performance. If you're someone whose grades are decent but perhaps not the most boast worthy, volunteer experience, relevant work experience, and community and extracurricular involvement could tip the scale in your favour.

continued on the next page

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The GRE, GMAT, LSAT, and MCAT are tests administered in order to evaluate your potential performance in regards to a specific field. The Graduate Records Exam (GRE), Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT), Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) and Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) are ones that you cannot, I repeat, *cannot* wing. Besides being extremely expensive to write (a GRE will run you \$140US), most require you to take a course in order to be properly prepared to sit them. As well, although you can take the test more than once, any scores you receive ever are listed on your transcripts. There are a host of places to find practice exams, and the Academic Guidance Centre can provide a list of test dates and testing centres, so take advantage.

Letters of recommendation are almost always required. While many schools stipulate how many letters they would like from faculty members, and how many they'd like to be written by work supervisors or personal acquaintances, it's important to choose people who have known you in a few contexts—as a student, a member of a committee, et cetera. Picking someone articulate who can write can't hurt either.

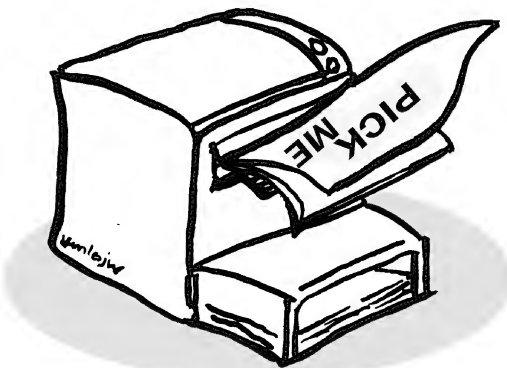
A high quality personal statement or letter of recommendation is a staple of grad school application packages. Written by you, the candidate, it should include the program you're applying to, what you hope to get out of it, possible career paths you're considering, specific faculty members or research projects that attracted you to the institution, work, internship, or volunteering experience, and anything else that might distinguish you from the thousands of other applicants.

A writing sample is also a common requirement. This would be an essay, or section of an essay, that you wrote in your undergraduate career. It doesn't necessarily have to be an Honours Thesis. However, individual schools will stipulate the type and length of writing they wish to see. Don't stray from their requirements in an attempt to be creative. You'll just indicate to them that you can't follow the simplest of directions. Either that or you just can't read.

These are the bare minimum. Many programs will require additional materials, so it's important that if you're positive that grad school is for you, you don't dally getting your application in. Vaillancourt recommends ideally establishing a timeline that works for you and spans over a year (seven to eight months at the least) before your graduation. Your timeline should include all the steps you need to take such as scheduling and writing exams by preferably the fall or summer preceding the application deadline, asking for recommendations and transcripts well ahead of time, and starting a personal statement early on in the game.

But for those who, in light of the above advice, are beginning to panic, don't. Nothing is final. Vaillancourt suggests applying to several schools: some highly competitive ones, some middle-tier schools, and a few safer bets. That said, beating the last minute rush and applying earlier than other candidates could work in your favour, as most admissions offices evaluate applications as they come in. Try to gain practical experiences directly related to your targeted field of study in the form of volunteer or work experience, summer internships, and on-campus research projects. This advice is applicable before applying to, and possibly after getting refused admission to, graduate school. If the latter situation just happens to be your case, Vaillancourt suggests obtaining an intermediate degree of other credential to help boost your GPA and then reapplying.

"Try and try again," she says. "Remember that it's a combination of factors that will determine whether you make the cut." Of course, as she explains, the most important thing is to "make your last two years count." □



CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad, please go to www.campusclassifieds.ca

FOR RENT

Looking for a place to live? Check out www.rentingspaces.ca to find your next home! Hundreds of current listings throughout Edmonton. A service of your Students' Union. Newly ren'd 900sq ft 2-bdrm home near U of A and Whyte. Rents for \$850/month + utilities. 4 appliances. 717-9942.

1-bdrm downtown loft, direct LRT/Bus connection. 6 apps. new laminate flr, small pets only. \$575/brnht. \$900 SD. Ph. 893-3333.

LOFT downtown. \$750/mo. Beautifully finished, red brick, mosaic tiling. 497-8632. loft10309@yahoo.ca.

Spring break. South Padre Island, Texas. 2H condo located 1/4 block to beach and walking distance to restaurants and entertainment district. \$1200/week USD. (956) 299-0194.

PARKING SPOT - walk to U of A from 109st - 82ave. \$25/mo. Call Mike 893-9567.

Room in spacious and clean bungalow in Riverbend with direct bus to U of A outside the door. \$350 per month + utilities. ckrupa@ualberta.ca.

SERVICE

FREE HAIRCUTS. Haircut models required for downtown salon and spa. Please call Avari at 482-2366.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Red Deer College in Kenya 1-30 May, 2006. Masai Mara Topo National Park, Indian Ocean Coast. Principles of ecology and/or indigenous and cultural minorities in the modern world. www.rdc.ab.ca (403) 342-3504.

Karma Tashi Ling Tibetan Buddhist Centre, Lama Ani Kunsang resident teacher, invites students and staff to Buddhist meditation practice Weds 7pm, 10502 70 ave. 633-6157.

ASL sign language class level one begins 17 January, 2006 for twelve weeks. Tuesdays, 6:30-9:30pm. Contact Specialized Support & Disability Services, U of A, 492-3381; 2-800 SUB for more information.

ASL sign language class level two begins 19 January, 2006 for twelve weeks. Wednesdays, 6:30-9:30pm. Contact Specialized Support & Disability Services, U of A, 492-3381; 2-800 SUB for more information.

EMPLOYMENT - FULL TIME

Independent Advocacy provides service for adults w/ developmental disabilities. Require caring profess for flt and pjt work, various shifts. Duties incl assist w/ personal care, transferring, light house keeping, meal prep and community access. Reg shifts are 4 on 4 off rotation. Staff are placed in various locations depending on avail openings. Requirements: current std 1st aid, police and child welfare checks. \$11.84-\$12.84 Apply by fax 454-9522 or e-mail.

EMPLOYMENT - PART TIME

RA Milne & Associates Ltd, Western Canada's largest independent research firm, requires part-time interviewers. Absolutely no sales involved. Flexible hours. Flexible schedule good for students. Over \$9.50/hour + bonuses. Send resume to j.parslow@milne-test.com or fax 780-448-9047.

Childcare providers needed for Boys & Girls Clubs of Edm. Help needed in West Edm. and/or North Edm. \$10/hr, ghs/cls per site. For details www.boysandgirls.ab.ca or 468-1935.

PIT receptionist required for sports chiropractic clinic. Campus location, flexible hours, competitive wages and flt summer

hours. Applicant must possess excellent communication and customer service skills. Reception experience an asset but not required. E-mail resume to kristens@viewall.eyhealth.com.

PIT personal care aide needed for 22H quad, Southgate area, training provided, \$12/hr, Call Lisa 425-5450.

Alta Care Resources is looking for Crisis Intervention Workers to work 1:1 with youth. You must have 2 years post-secondary or experience and a reliable vehicle. Starts at \$13/hr. E-mail brands@telus.net or visit www.altacareresources.com.

LOST AND FOUND

Missing gold chain with crucifix, last seen between Phys Ed Building and bus terminal. Has great sentimental value. Reward if found. Call Stoe at 433-5018.

PERSONALS

It's Party Time! Dial 44-PARTY Ads, jokes, stories and MORE! Free Local Call. 18+ Ladies-railways free! Guys from 50minut! 1st time callers get free trial ad with code: 4283. Meet new people - make new friends. Try it NOW! (780) 44-PARTY.

Free iPod after 10th date. (Nano only) H! there. Thanks for checking me out. I'm not sure exactly what you'd like to know about me, so below is a list of qualities that I've identified in myself over the years. It should more or less cover any questions you might have: I have a somewhat bizarre, letterman-esque sense of humour. I like them animals. I do yoga. I get worked up over politics and injustice. I'm caffeine-free. I like pretending to speak French, and sometimes hip-hop, too, yo. My spelling and grammar are excellent. I have good earning potential. I have nice shoes. I can probably fix your computer. I floss twice daily. I make the best mac 'n' cheese ever. (The secret is taco sauce. Unfortunately, I eat healthy now, so I don't really make this anymore. :)) I'm photogenic, thanks to Photoshop. I'm really good at hiding Easter eggs. I might be charming. If you are interested, e-mail sackertax@gmail.com

GATEWAY ILLUSTRATIONS

Interested? E-mail iris@gateway.ualberta.ca

OUR NORTH AMERICA

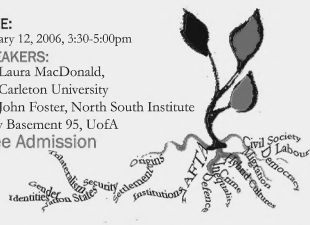


"From Turtle Island to the Security and Prosperity Partnership"

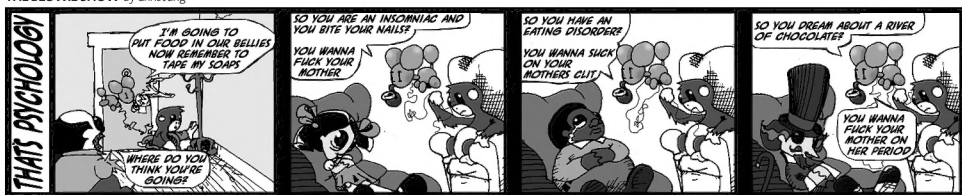
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DATE:
January 12, 2006, 3:30-5:00pm

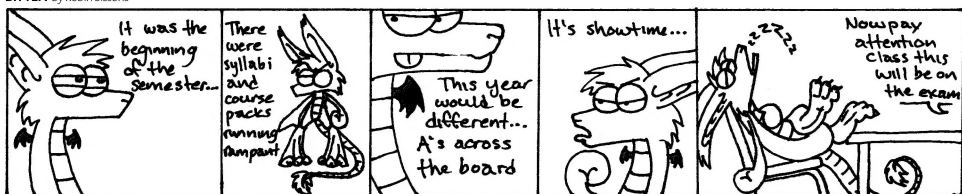
SPEAKERS:
Dr. Laura MacDonald,
Carleton University
Dr. John Foster, North South Institute
Tory Basement 95, UoA
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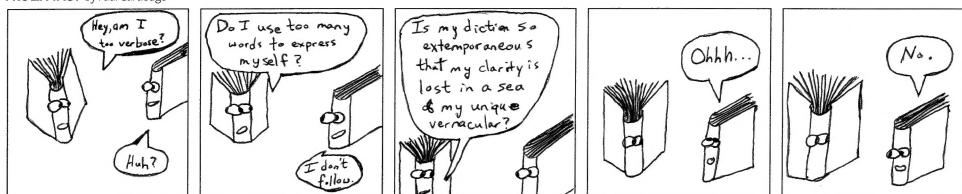
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you've got questions. we've got answers.





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